HORACE's EPISTLE

TO THE

PISOS,

ON THE

ART OF POETRY,

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE,

WITH

OBSERVATIONS AND NOTES

CRITICAL AND EXPLANATORY.

By John Hedman M.D.

EDINBURGH:
PRINTED FOR JOHN BELL: AND
GEO. ROBINSON, LONDON.

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PREFACE.

AMONG the literary remains of antiquity, few, if any, from the Auguſtan age downwards, have been more favourably received, or treated with leſs cenſure, than the Works of *Horace;* and of theſe, the Epiſtle to the *Piſos* hath been conſidered by the Commentators as marking the ſpirit and genius of the Author more than any other of his Works. We may, in ſome meaſure, judge of the value of this Epiſtle, from the references to, and quotations from it, in compoſitions almoſt of every kind; but more particularly in thoſe which relate to taſte.

NOTWITHSTANDING the avowed merit of *Horace's Art of Poetry*, the general arrangement of the parts, and a few paſſages in it, have proved ſubjects of controverſy among the critics. Accordingly, attempts have been made, particularly by *Daniel Heinſius*, to render the connection better, and the whole more perſpicuous, by tranſpoſing ſome paſſages. The learned Dr *Hurd*, retaining the common arrangement, thinks the whole may be aptly divided into three parts; and that the Author's general intention was the reformation of the Roman ſtage.

THE firſt part of Dr *Hurd's* diviſion, being preparatory to the reſt, contains ſome general rules for poetical compoſition, negligently, though elegantly, thrown together, as an opening to the piece. The ſecond part is laid out in correcting the abuſes of the Roman ſtage, in marking what conſtitutes the propriety of the Drama in general, and more particularly of Tragedy.

Tragedy. The laſt is intended to point out the qualifications of a Poet: "Ex- "horts to correctneſs in writing; and is "taken up partly in removing the cauſes, "that prevented it, and partly in direct- "ing to the uſe of ſuch means, as might "ſerve to promote it."

I SHALL take the liberty to offer a conjecture relating to this matter, leaving the reader to judge of it as he ſhall find it more or leſs plauſible. *Piſo* the father, and *Horace*, as we have reaſon to believe, were intimate friends. We learn from the epiſtle, that the two ſons of *Piſo* exerciſed themſelves in poetical compoſitions: and we may gather from the ſame epiſtle, that, from a youthful impatience, they either had expoſed their works to the public, while in a crude ſtate, or were diſpoſed to do it. The father would naturally apply to *Horace*, as a perſon of diſtinguiſhed taſte, to recommend to his ſons more prudence in conducting their literary

literary eſſays. *Horace* would find it proper to dwell on the branch which was chiefly the ſubject of the young men's exertions, that is, the Drama. It is not improbable that *Horace*, at ſetting out, might intend an epiſtle of leſs extent, ſuch as thoſe which he wrote to his familiar friends. But being maſter of his ſubject, and materials flowing in ſucceſſion on his mind, the epiſtle had thus inſenſibly ſwelled to a greater length, and terminated in a regular compoſition, as we now find it. The reaſons for theſe conjectures ſhall be given in the courſe of the Notes.

To theſe obſervations it may be objected, that by them we ſuppoſe *Horace* not very conſiſtent with himſelf, in prefixing a title, which promiſes a poem containing the art of poetry at large; which, however, is ſo far from being the caſe, that, while the Epic, making avowedly the moſt important poetical department,

is

is ſuperficially touched; another branch of leſs importance, occupies the greater part of the piece.

THE anſwer to theſe objections is, That it may be doubted whether *Horace* himſelf prefixed the title *De Arte Poetica* to this epiſtle. *Quintilian* is the firſt, if I miſtake not, who mentions this title. *Quintilian* flouriſhed about a century later than *Horace*; in which time the poem might probably have had the title prefixed to it by another hand than that of the Author. But, as the poem contains many paſſages relating to poetical compoſition, taken in the moſt extenſive ſenſe, the title is not ſo inconſiſtent as ſome critics would make it.

WHAT chiefly diſtinguiſhes the elegance of *Horace's* manner, is boldneſs, dignity and ſimplicity, with unaffected eaſe and ſeeming negligence. But however careleſs his compoſitions appear, there is good reaſon

ſon to believe they had coſt him long and tedious poliſhing. Nor hath any Author been more ſucceſsful in taking off every appearance of labour: for, if we except a few of the Odes, his firſt thoughts ſeem to have been immediately committed to writing, and never after retouched. This ſeeming careleſſneſs cannot fail to pleaſe every reader of taſte.

Horace hath, more frequently than any other of the Roman Poets, made his verſes terminate with particles, or indeclinable monoſyllables, as *ſi*, *an*, *ſic*, *non*, *et*. The ſame liberty is taken in the following Verſion; this being, in ſo far, an imitation of the Author's manner: nor doth it appear why this ſhould be an impropriety in one language more than in another.

Horace's brevity is not productive of obſcurity. But ſome critics have cenſured him for not being ſufficiently attentive to connection. Epiſtolary compoſition, and even

even the Satyres of *Horace* may be conſidered of this kind, doth not require any cloſe connection: Nay, a laboured and minute connection gives a formality to epiſtolary ſtyle, which renders it diſagreeable, as being more of the nature of an oration, or of a ſermon, than of an epiſtle. *Horace* hath, indeed, been bolder in this reſpect than *Juvenal*, or perhaps than any other Satyriſt. He ſeems to conduct himſelf as one, who, entertaining a company, occaſionally changes his ſubject, in order to ſupport animation, and to prevent a languor in the circle: So the Poet, without loſing ſight of his ſubject, frequently ſurpriſeth his reader with unexpected changes. It may be further obſerved, that a minute attention to connection is often neglected by bold and refined geniuſes; the great lines of their works occupying their minds ſo much, that ſmaller circumſtances eſcape them, or rather are diſregarded, as retarding their career. In like manner, ſome of the moſt diſtinguiſhed painters, having

finiſhed the outlines of their works, in which all the expreſſion is contained, left the ſhading to their ſcholars, conſidering that as a waſte of their own time; and minute finiſhing has been held a mark of an inferior rather than of a great genius. Beſides the peculiarities of *Horace* already mentioned, he ſeems to have carefully avoided, as he probably deſpiſed, a brilliancy of language. This merits the attention of a tranſlator no leſs than other circumſtances.

If it be ſtill inſiſted, that ſome verſes are abruptly introduced, and that the whole would have appeared with a better grace, had a cloſer connection been obſerved, I ſhall take the liberty further to offer a conjecture relating to this circumſtance. It is to be preſumed that all Poets, whoſe minds are much occupied in verſification, occaſionally commit to writing verſes, which, having no connection with one another, are kept in reſerve to be afterwards

wards inſerted in poems, as opportunities offer. *Virgil's* third and ninth Paſtorals ſeem to contain verſes of this kind; nor could any ſpecies of compoſition be better ſuited to this purpoſe, than the alternate diſtichs of the ſhepherds. In Mr *Pope's* epiſtle to Dr *Arbuthnot*, are many paſſages which had appeared long before they were connected to make up that epiſtle; and the fourth book of the Dunciad, we have reaſon to believe, contains paſſages which the author probably had in ſtore long before the publication of that poem. *Horace's* epiſtle to the *Piſos*, being probably the laſt of his compoſitions, he would willingly embrace the opportunity of inſerting, in that poem, ſuch verſes as could decently find a place there, and which otherwiſe would have been loſt. This conjecture, I think, joined with *Horace's* natural inattention to cloſe connection, goes far to account for the paſſages in the poem, which ſeem to be abruptly introduced.

But

But, in a treatiſe on Criticiſm, it doth not appear that cloſe connection, or a regular deduction of obſervations, as naturally following, or ariſing out of one another, can be preſerved. Dr *Johnſon's* reflections on this ſubject, ſeem to me ſo pertinent, that I ſhall, without further apology, take the liberty to inſert them here. "Almoſt every poem," ſays that ingenious author, "conſiſting of precepts, "is ſo far arbitrary and immethodical, "that many of the paragraphs may change "places, with no apparent inconvenience; "for of two or more poſitions, depend- "ing upon ſome remote and general prin- "ciple, there is ſeldom any cogent reaſon "why one ſhould precede the other. But "for the order in which they ſtand, "whatever it be, a little ingenuity may "eaſily give a reaſon. *It is poſſible*, ſays "Hooker, *that, by long circumduction, from "any one truth, all truth may be inferred.* "Of all homogeneous truths, at leaſt of "all truths reſpecting the ſame general "end,

"end, in whatever ſeries they may be "produced, a concatenation by interme-"diate ideas may be formed, ſuch as, "when it is once ſhewn, ſhall appear na-"tural; but if this order be reverſed, "another mode of connection, equally ſpe-"cious, may be found or made. Ariſtotle is "praiſed for naming Fortitude firſt of the "cardinal virtues, as that, without which, "no other virtue can ſteadily be practiſed; "but he might, with equal propriety, "have placed Prudence and Juſtice before "it, ſince without Prudence Fortitude is "mad; without Juſtice it is miſchievous."*

A NEW tranſlation of *Horace's* Art of Poetry will perhaps be deemed ſuperfluous, ſo many having been already preſented to the public. But among theſe tranſlations, eſpecially ſuch as can lay claim to any degree of merit, there are few, if any, in which paſſages are not to be found more expreſſive either of the author's manner

* Life of Mr Pope.

ner or meaning, than the ſame paſſages in the other tranſlations. If, therefore, ſuch paſſages, however few, ſhall be found in the following tranſlation, theſe ſhall be conſidered as, in ſome meaſure, a compenſation for the Tranſlator's labour.

If I miſtake not, I am not ſingular in my opinion, that lines conſiſting of eight ſyllables are better ſuited to *Horace's* manner than thoſe of ten ſyllables, commonly called Heroics. By ſhorter verſes, we are naturally led to a cloſer and more ſententious compoſition, than when the lines are more extended. It is true, we are not under the neceſſity of always making the ſenſe terminate with the verſe. The contrary, for the ſake of variety, is frequently proper. But when the rhymes return more frequently upon us, we are inſenſibly led, if the expreſſion will be allowed, to condenſe our ideas.

If, therefore, a tranſlator of this Poet ſhould,

ſhould, by the length of the verſes, be led into much periphraſis; that verſion, merely by being too diffuſe, though in every other reſpect excellent, would fail to be Horatian. I would not wiſh to be underſtood here to glance at any tranſlator. The only verſion I had ſeen, before finiſhing the following, was Lord *Roſcommon's*: ſince which I have read that of Mr *Francis*; and I willingly congratulate readers of taſte on the elegant editions and verſion of *Horace*, with which that ingenious tranſlator hath favoured the public.

It is hardly neceſſary to mention the diſadvantages under which the Engliſh tranſlator of an elegant Greek or Roman original lies. Whoever would ſee theſe difficulties ſet in a proper light, will find them in Mr *Dryden's* preface to the *Æneid*. It may ſuffice to obſerve, that the number of particles alone, unavoidable in the Engliſh, and, I believe, in every modern language, tends to enervate a tranſlation

to

to ſuch a degree, that the ſpirit of the original, in a great meaſure, evaporates, in the verſion. As the particles in the Engliſh language muſt have their places, the inconveniencies ariſing from them become greater, as the verſes are more contracted: And were a poem of any conſiderable length to be undertaken with verſes ſimilar to one of thoſe ſubjoined to Dr *Swift's Gulliver*, each line conſiſting of three ſyllables, the difficulty would ſoon be found inſurmountable.

HORACE, beſides other ſingular qualifications, was poſſeſſed of a power of verſifying peculiar to himſelf, which, with the advantages attending a language conſtructed with inflected terminations, enabled him frequently to convey a group of ideas in a few words. This peculiarity of manner, and theſe extraordinary powers, render it difficult and dangerous to imitate this author. *Perſius* is a ſtudious imitator of *Horace*; but in many parts of his Satyres,

tyres we find obſcurity and affectation inſtead of eaſe and perſpicuity. Notwithſtanding which theſe Satyres have their merit.

FROM the preceding and many other circumſtances, ſuch is the inferiority of modern languages to thoſe conſtructed with inflected terminations, that I am apt to believe, the beſt modern tranſlation of *Horace*, or of any elegant Greek or Roman Author, into a modern language, will yield little or no pleaſure to a perſon who is maſter of the dead languages, and who is able to read theſe Authors with true taſte. For when any object of taſte, from its extraordinary excellencies, yields us an exquiſite degree of pleaſure, and attracts our admiration; we can but ill tolerate the ſame object when in a more imperfect ſtate. This will be found to obtain in the moſt important concerns of life. Even the mutual ties of the connubial ſtate ſeldom fail to relax, when their ſtrength de-

pends on the corporeal qualities, but are unſupported by thoſe of the mind. The former decline by length of time, while the latter are improved.

It is not meant that the ſuperior excellency of the dead languages conſiſts ſolely in inflected terminations. The leſs neceſſity for particles, and particularly for the repetition of the ſame particles; the termination of verbs ſuperſeding the frequent uſe of pronouns; brevity, or fewer words expreſſive of the ſame ſenſe; a more melodious mixture of vowels and conſonants; and an arbitrary arrangement of words, eſpecially in poetical compoſition, conſpire to this ſuperiority over modern languages.

It is not to be expected that verſified tranſlations can be equally literal with thoſe in proſe. The following Verſion will be found, in many places, partaking more of the paraphraſe than perhaps any former

mer tranſlation: but attention hath been given to convey the ſenſe of the Author throughout. In a few paſſages I have taken the liberty to add a verſe or two: Theſe are meant either to render the connection more obvious to a reader unacquainted with the original; or ſometimes to heighten the colouring, without otherwiſe affecting the piece. Thus, in the firſt paragraph, whether the additional idea in the dream will be allowed to have an effect of this kind, as figuratively expreſſive of compoſitions abounding with the falſe ſublime, interſperſed with flat and frigid paſſages, is left to the reader to judge.

It hath been common to print the Text and the Verſion on oppoſite pages. But, when the number of lines in the one is not equal to that in the other, this is both unſeemly and inconvenient. The original, therefore, in this Volume, is placed between the Verſion and the Obſervations.

But

But that they may be the more readily conſulted, or correſponding paſſages compared together, they are divided into the ſame number of paragraphs, the numerical figures of which direct to thoſe parts of the Obſervations and Notes anſwering to their reſpective paragraphs.

The Obſervations and Notes ſubjoined, are intended for readers who are but moderately acquainted with the antiquities of *Greece* and *Rome*, and perhaps leſs with the Works of *Horace*. The Tranſlator would willingly flatter himſelf that they may prove of uſe to youth when beginning to acquire a taſte for polite literature; and may be conſidered as a preparation for the more extenſive inveſtigations of *Dacier* and *Sanadon*, or for the controverſial criticiſms of *Bentley* and *Cunningham*. Young minds are ſeldom poſſeſſed of patience ſufficient for the minute and elaborate obſervations of theſe and other critics. To render the Notes more attracting and inſtructive, the precepts

precepts of *Horace* are occaſionally applied to the manners of modern times, and particularly to thoſe of our Drama. Dr *Hurd's* Commentary and Notes on the Epiſtle to *Auguſtus*, and on the Art of Poetry, ſeem ſufficient to ſuperſede the greater part of what hath been ſaid before on theſe two Epiſtles.

BESIDES the inducements to attempt this Verſion already mentioned, there remains ſtill one, little important to the Reader, more ſo to the Tranſlator. Having, for ſome time paſt, by an event, which it doth not intereſt the Reader to know, been deprived of the pleaſure of reading, which had made the chief amuſement of the former part of his life, he undertook this and ſome ſimilar taſks with a view to prevent a void in time, and a languor of mind. This he found to anſwer his hopes, at leaſt as far as he had reaſon to expect. He, therefore, rates his labour, as a miſer his treaſure, who, though

though he can never uſe it, nor reap any benefit from it, is ſufficiently repaid by the pleaſure he had in collecting it: And, though the Tranſlator be not inſenſible to the approbation of the public, he conſiders himſelf, in the preſent caſe, as without further claim, having already had his reward.

CON-

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HORACE's

HORACE's ART OF POETRY.

1. TO canvas, as the whim might hit,
Should an eccentric hand commit
A Horſe's neck and Lady's head
Join'd to diſcordant members, clad
With various feathers, and below
An ugly Fiſh complete the ſhow:
Could you your laughter check, were you,
My Friends, this aukward piece to view?
However wild, believe me, ſuch
Would be the compoſition, which
No uniformity can claim;
But like one ſickly, in a dream
Now ſoaring, unreſiſted flies,
Tho' without wings, along the ſkies:
Now is, from ſtrength exhauſted, found
Torpid or lifeleſs on the ground:
Sees monſtrous trunks with heads and feet
In frightful diſproportion meet.

" Like

" Like liberties we know to be
" To Poets and to Painters free.
" Our boundleſs fancies boldly trace
" Delineations as we pleaſe:
" Indulgence to each other grant,
" With mutual freedom as we want."
But nature not to croſs, nor make
Lambs join with wolves, with birds a ſnake.
In the ſame piece, who'd pencil here
A calm, while tempeſts there appear?

2. There are, who boaſting mighty things,
To ſing of Battles, Gods and Kings,
Important ſubjects undertake,
And ſtraining violent efforts make.
As on a tawdry fuſtian frock,
We ſee ſome ſhreds of velvet ſtuck,
So they, as if by chance, may ſhine,
With here and there a ſplendid line;
Deſcribe a temple; winding ſtreams
Thro' meads reflecting ſolar beams;
The Rhine's laborious courſe purſue;
Or ſketch the rainbow's varied hue:
But theſe all foreign to the ſcene,
And dragg'd by head and ſhoulders in.

A ſhipwreck and the hapleſs crew.
In painting if you mean to ſhew,
Why ſhade your leading figures by
A fav'rite cypreſs tow'ring high?
And clay, when wrought to form, ſhould not,
Begun a ciſtern, end a pot.
Let then your compoſitions be,
For grace and chaſte ſimplicity,
Diſtinguiſh'd; let the tenor ſhine,
Throughout with harmony divine.

3. We Poets, by a phantom fed
Of rectitude, are oft miſled.
Obſcure and unconnected ſome,
In ſtudying brevity, become.
In hunting what can nought avail,
With others nerves and vigour fail.
The falſe ſublime who labour, grow
Turgid, as boys ſoap-bubbles blow.
One ſeldom riſes from the ground,
Where caution to exceſs is found.
Who, to a prodigy, would change
A fancy, and unbounded range,
Paint dolphins beating up the woods,
And wild boars rutting in the floods,

Perverting

Perverting truth and Nature's laws,
Nor reader merits, nor applauſe.
To oppoſite extremes they run,
Who artleſsly a fault would ſhun.
A Sculptor near the Circus dwells,
Who ſtatues, for his living, ſells:
In theſe, tho' hair be well expreſt
And nails, he fails in all the reſt:
And is, in part however fine,
Unhappy in the whole deſign.
I'd rather men would me befool,
Would mark me out for ridicule,
Sneer at my bottle-noſe, and cry,
How ill it ſuits his ſparkling eye!
Than thus my compoſitions frame
Like his unharmoniz'd and lame.

4. Strain ev'ry nerve, ye Bards, to chuſe
A ſubject equal to your muſe.
Weigh what your ſhoulders can endure,
Rejecting what exceeds your pow'r.
In themes, how happy the effect,
When taſte and judgment found direct!
For order fit, your work ſhall be
Admir'd, and perſpicuity.

Of

Of juſt arrangement ſuch you'll find,
If I miſtake not, on the mind
The pow'r; the faſcination ſuch
That nothing will be ſaid too much:
What parts admittance now demand
You'll ſee, what later ought to ſtand.
From ample ſtores, no more in doubt,
You'll this ſelect and that throw out.

5. Of words with delicacy make
Your choice; the fitteſt only take:
Let none or low, or meaſur'd wrong,
Or harſh diſgrace the promis'd ſong:
And when in a connected chain,
You abſtruſe ſubjects would explain,
Happy if you to words well known
A new ſignification join;
Which, by a well turn'd ſentence, may
Appear perſpicuous as the day.
Tho' none, but at a moderate rate,
In language ought to innovate;
Yet you'll indulgence find, when you
New words invent for ſcience new.
Thoſe which from Grecian fountains come,
If latiniz'd, will paſs at *Rome*.

But why to early times be ſhown
Indulgence we deny our own?
Muſt *Plautus* and *Cecilius* have
What we to *Virgil* never gave?
If I enrich the Roman ſtore;
'Tis but what *Ennius* did before
And *Cato*: Muſt then envy be
More liberally beſtow'd on me?

6. Words paſs like coin which bears the prints
And ſignature of modern mints.
As leaves of trees, words ſhew a crop;
Like them they grow, decay and drop.
Like man they paſs life's varied ſtage
Of youth, decline, and middle age.
Whate'er of life the *Fates* allow,
We ſtill and ours to death are due.
Here lands are loſt in ſeas; and there,
Seas, in their turn, this loſs repair.
Lakes, large and fit for trade before,
For navigation fit no more,
Now feel the plow, and millions feed,
To neighb'ring cities yielding bread.
Kings change the courſe of rivers too,
Teaching them others to purſue.

All

All human things unſtable tend
To variation or their end.
The vigour, elegance and grace
Of language too, like them, muſt ceaſe.
Words, the moſt obſolete, revive
And flouriſh; others now alive,
Into diſuſe declining go,
When lordly *Cuſtom* means it ſo;
For wide her ſceptre *Cuſtom* wields,
And language too ſubmiſſive yields.

7. What ſtile and meaſures ſuited are
To heroes feats, and ruthleſs war,
To Kings, who martial dangers ſhare,
Read *Homer*, and you'll find them there.
Effuſions rueful firſt diſcloſ'd,
In notes unequally compos'd,
Were elegiacs juſtly nam'd,
In which at length love's triumphs claim'd
A place: but who the author was,
Who fram'd theſe new poetic laws,
Remains a queſtion unreſolv'd,
And in deep darkneſs lies involv'd.
Archilochus, whom fury warm'd,
With mad Iambics firſt was arm'd.

To

To Comedy this foot is found,
And Tragedy's majeſtic ſound
Well ſuited; is for buſineſs fit,
For dialogue and the noiſy pit.
For Gods and thoſe of divine race,
For heroes, who *Olympia* grace,
For wine and love and youthful fire
The Muſe ordain'd the ode and lyre.
Can I unqualified the fame,
The laurel due to Poets claim,
While numbers to deſcription I,
From ignorance, cannot apply?

8. Notes mean and fram'd for vulgar ears,
The tragic Muſe indignant hears:
Plaintive her voice, her movements ſlow;
Her garments graceful downwards flow;
Thoughts low to lofty knows to turn,
And even with dignity to mourn.
Verſe pompous, with ſolemnity
Deliver'd, ſuit not Comedy.
She unreſerv'd, with jolly face,
Affecting no majeſtic grace,
With air familiar, chearful, plain,
Knows even by joke her ends to gain;

Is

Is imitative, and can change
With art, and thro' the paſſions range.
Of theſe let each her place obtain,
And, with her parts, diſtinct remain.
Yet Comedy at times can riſe,
Can emulate her ſiſter's ſize.
Æſchine may dwell on female charms,
Or *Chremes* rail in lofty terms:
And Tragedy her ſtate, her pride,
Her buſkin ſometimes lays aſide;
Deigns pompous language to forego,
And in plain proſe to tell her woe.
In exile *Peleus* and forlorn,
And *Telephus* expos'd to ſcorn,
If from ſpectators eyes they mean
Tears to extract, let them complain,
Not in high ſounding courtly words,
But ſuch as common life affords.

9. 'Tis not enough that Poems be
Terſe, and from ev'ry blemiſh free:
In them we ought no leſs to find,
What catches and delights the mind:
And authors, who of powers as theſe
Can boaſt, may lead us as they pleaſe.

In tears or laughter would you keep
Spectators, learn to laugh and weep.
Wish you my tears of grief to see,
'Tis yours these tears to draw from me.
One, who in action aukward is,
Excites or yawning or a hiss.
Words suit a rueful count'nance best
Which indicate a mind depress;
Those full of threat'nings, one in rage;
And words more serious suit the sage.
Here things are constituted so,
That from external objects flow
Pow'rs, which our mental passions move
To anger, hatred, grief or love.
'T's Nature's next effort to teach
These feelings by the use of speech.

10. Of laughter Romans raise a peal,
If in rehearsal actors fail.
Mark well, and learn with all your art
Propriety in ev'ry part:
Whether a God or Hero speak;
A youth, or one in years and weak;
A matron of an high degree,
Or a pains-taking nurse she be;

A ſtrolling pedlar, or a clown,
His country what, and where his town.
What fame reports avoid to quit,
Or frame a fiction like to it.
Thus, if the great *Achilles* you
Would ſketch and repreſent anew;
Proud let him be, impetuous, bold,
By laws coërcive uncontrol'd;
Rights due to regal power diſown;
By arms claim all things as his own.
Revengeful be the Colchian Dame,
Exceeding *Jaſon's* pow'r to tame.
Ino in tears. *Ixion* be
Mark'd for the deepeſt perfidy.
To wand'ring doom'd be *Io* fair;
To blood *Oreſtes* and deſpair.

11. If on the ſtage you mean to ſhew
A part or compoſition new;
Let unity theſe, to the end
From the beginning, recommend.
Attempt with caution Fables which
No author yet hath dar'd to touch.
From *Homer* 'tis more ſafe to bring
A theme, than one unknown to ſing.

A ſubject you may make your own,
Tho' ſung by others and well known;
If vulgar thoughts you to narrate
Avoid, nor ſlaviſhly tranſlate.
Lay not uncautiouſly your plan
So narrow, that you never can
Advance; but, with your labours vain,
In fetters you aſham'd remain.
Begin not, as we have been told,
The Poetaſter did of old,
"On *Priam* what the Fates did bring,
"And *Troy's* lamented fall I ſing."—
What, equal to ſuch boaſting, can
Come from this oſtentatious man!
In labour mountains thus produce,
With much alarm, a wretched mouſe.

12. The Bard with greater juſtice draws
Our approbation and applauſe,
Who modeſtly the Muſe to bring
Aſſiſtance begg'd and powers to ſing
The man, who driven by fatal law
Of various ſtates the manners ſaw.
That ſmoke preſages flame we know;
But flame from ſmoke ought pure to flow.

So

So he his theme, obſcure before,
Advancing brightens more and more:
With due poetic licence tells
Of *Sylla's* dogs and horrid yells,
Charybdis' ſurges whirling round,
And *Cyclops* bellowing under ground.
The war of *Troy* from *Leda's* eggs
Avoids to trace; nor drawling begs
His reader's patience, till he ſhow
How much 'tis proper we ſhould know;
From *Meleager's* murder down
Till *Diomed* gain'd th' Auſonian crown.
He rapid to the great event
Haſtens; from things as they preſent
Selects whatever entertains,
And keeps his reader's mind in chains;
Rejecting what he well can ſee
Would in his work a blemiſh be.
He truth with fiction mixes ſo,
That all parts due proportion ſhow.

13. Would you the theatre command?
Wiſh you your piece the proof to ſtand
Of popular voice? or dare you hope
Applauſe till the laſt curtain drop?

Long you to figure in this line?
Hear then the people's wiſh and mine.
To ſuit your labours to the ſtage,
The manners mark of ev'ry age.
To various temperaments and years
Give what moſt ſuitable appears.
The child, who late hath learn'd to walk,
In accents more diſtinct to talk,
With irritable paſſions teaz'd,
Is by his play-things ſoon appeas'd.
The beardleſs youth, whoſe tutor's chain
His mind no longer can reſtrain,
To horſes, dogs and open fields,
Himſelf a willing victim yields.
Croſs to thoſe friends who would adviſe,
Like wax to vicious manners plies.
Of neceſſaries careleſs, he
Squanders with prodigality.
Impatient, longs aloft to ſoar,
Deſpiſing what he dov'd before.
A change of mind with riper years,
And different ſcenery ſoon appears.
Leſs giddy now, the fancy tends
To honours chiefly, wealth and friends.
We learn with more reſerve to act
Leſt penitential we retract.

14. In

14. In the laſt period hath been found
Much inconvenience to abound.
Whether old age, from avarice, dreads
To uſe the things it moſtly needs;
Or nature meant that man, when old,
Should timid grow, moroſe and cold;
Reſerv'd in hope, with nerves unſtrung;
Applauding all he knew when young;
Cenſorious, ſlow, to youth ſevere,
And ever in a tide of care.
The coming years bring to our minds
Advantages of various kinds:
Whilſt thoſe retiring take away
What length of time cannot repay.
See then what is intended by
This ſo well known œconomy;
That to each period, as by art,
Allotted be its proper part:
And prompters are, in ev'ry ſtage,
Found correſponding to its age.

15. Some parts in public ſcenes appear,
We others by narration hear.
Things to the mind before unknown,
And ent'ring by the ear alone,

Draw

Draw leſs attention or ſurpriſe
Than had they enter'd by the eyes.
But what behind the ſcenes ſhould be
Perform'd, let no ſpectator ſee.
In proper language one may hear
What yet no human eye can bear.
Let not *Medea's* murdering knife
In preſence take an infant's life:
Nor, in full view, ſhould *Atreus* dare
His impious morſels to prepare,
Unhappy *Progne* ceaſe to make
A bird, *Agenor's* ſon a ſnake.
Such fictions delicacy ſhock,
And incredulity provoke.
If you your compoſition mean
Should popular be, and often ſeen,
Let the fifth act the Fable end,
Leſs be it not, nor more extend.
And let no Deity appear,
Unleſs emergents call him there,
In which illuſtrious he may ſhine,
As ſuits his dignity divine.
More than three actors are unfit
At once, rarely a fourth admit.

16. The

16. The Chorus an important part
Bears, and requires uncommon art,
By every laudable effort,
Throughout the action to ſupport.
Let ſongs between the acts promote
And be conducive to the plot;
Conciliate friendſhips, temper rage,
Support the modeſt, pleaſe the ſage,
From peace, with gates wide open, ſhow
And frugal meals what pleaſures flow,
Laws ſalutary recommend,
And virtue, when oppreſs'd, defend;
Solemn and divine honours pay;
For bleſſings to the wretched pray;
Transferring riches from the proud
To thoſe more humble waiting food.
The Chorus thus may, in the ſong,
Correct, inſtruct, amuſe the throng;
May harmonize the whole, and may
Add ſtrength and ſpirit to the play.
The pipe was ſmall in ancient days,
Well ſuited to their ſimpler lays;
It bore no ornaments around,
Nor had, like ours, a trumpet-ſound;
Was uſeful to the chorus, when
The ſtage was mean, the benches thin.

The

The people virtuous then and few
To lux'ry no incentive knew.

17. When conqueſts of this people had
Their walls and bound'ries larger made,
When wine began and mirth to raiſe
Their minds, relax'd on holydays,
In verſe and muſic then was ſhown
A licence formerly unknown.
From vulgar audiences we know
The like effects will ever flow:
Clowns, who to taſte cannot pretend,
With more refin'd when mix'd, offend.
At length was chang'd the ancient ſong,
While rich and flowing robes along
The ſtage were by Muſicians drawn,
Of Grecian form and ſhining lawn.
Then meaſures new ſeem'd to inſpire
With loftier ſtrains the pipe and lyre;
While *Eloquence*, with all her flow'rs
Bewitching, and reſiſtleſs pow'rs,
Was found to emulate, in fame,
Reſponſes from the Pythian Dame.
Tragedians, in times more remote,
Contending, and the prize a goat,

Their

Their company to entertain
With joke, brought naked Satyrs in.
Spectators, after sacrifice,
With wine their minds solac'd and ease;
Lik'd novelty, and what would cheer,
As shews, and Satyrs wit severe.
But with these sneering Satyrs we
Ought only so much pleas'd to be,
As still on graver parts to think,
That they may not to meanness sink.
Let mirth be with the serious mix'd,
But with due limitations fix'd;
Lest one, a King who lately shone,
And figur'd in his purple gown,
In stews be with the rabble found,
And railing in a vulgar sound:
Or, whilst he lowness means to shun,
To opposite extremes may run.

18. The tragic Muse but ill can bear
Light verses, such they are to her
As dancing to a Matron grave,
When this the sacred Orgies crave.
So Satyrs mirth we seldom see
Accord with tragic dignity.

These

These Satyrs dialect clumsy, rude,
Their words indecent, periods crude,
Trust me, my Friends, as the refuse,
Of language, I disdain to use:
Avoid licentiously to range,
Or tragic shading quick to change:
Distinguish well a waggish slave
From one more dignified and grave.
Silenus may come aptly in
Where *Davus'* arts would spoil the scene;
Or *Pythias*, playsome, pert and bold,
Who filch'd the miser's hoarded gold.
From common dise when subjects brought
By you to comely form are wrought,
One thinks, while these in trading please,
He could have done the same with ease:
But here he'll find, tho' much he strain,
His powers unequal, labour vain.
Thus, when with art we nature join,
To render composition fine,
We trophies may from objects raise
Which daily pass before our eyes.

19. Were I to Fawns, fresh from the woods,
Of language to prescribe the modes,

They'd

They'd not, in character miſled,
Converſe as in the Forum bred;
Nor, veering to the worſe extreme,
Should wantonly the licence claim
To talk in language more impure
Than decent manners can endure;
For oft the mob amuſement finds
In what diſguſts ſuperior minds.
Of well conſtructed verſes few
Can judge, and of the meaſures due.
Poets of ev'ry claſs repair
To *Rome*, and find protection there:
For verſes aukward, flat, unſound,
Indulgence ſhameful there is found.
Shall I then from my purpoſe ſtray,
Write looſe and in a rambling way;
Hope that, while faults my poems have,
Good natur'd *Rome* will theſe forgive;
And I, like others, laurels win,
Who, ſure of pardon, blunder on?
Or conſcious faults, if there, will lie
To cenſure open; cautious try
My numbers by juſt laws to frame;
But dull, and without claim to fame.

20. Greek authors merit well your care,
In ſearching theſe no labour ſpare.
Yet our forefathers thought the wit
Of *Plautus* and his numbers fit
To pleaſe; and even to folly gave
Applauſe more than their worth could crave,
If we can in the ſcale of taſte,
Falſe wit, diſcriminate from chaſte,
Our ears, the fingers beating, learn
Melodious numbers to diſcern.
The Drama firſt by *Theſpis* was
Improv'd, but without proper laws.
The Chorus play'd with mean parade,
Nor ſplendid ſtage nor maſks they had:
A wain ſupplied the one, and theſe
Freſh lees of wine, which hid the face.
A ſtage, though moderate, next was rear'd,
And there the maſk and gown appear'd:
Theſe *Æſchylus* firſt introduc'd,
By him the buſkin firſt was us'd,
On which with dignity to walk
He taught, and gracefully to talk.

21. Next followed Comedy and drew
Applauſes to her merit due:

But

But ſo licentious ſoon became,
That public laws alone could tame
Her inſolence: the Chorus then
Was ſilent, nor was heard again,
Till authoriz'd or made to ſing;
But harmleſs and without a ſting.
Our Bards, with meritorious pride,
Have left nor verſe nor theme untried.
They, whom domeſtic ſubjects lead,
Who in Greek footſteps ceaſe to tread,
Whether high life or low they trace,
May well lay claim to thanks and praiſe.
Nor would our country leſs be found
For genius than for arms renown'd,
Were it not that our authors are,
Of tedious poliſhing and care
Impatient in their labours, while
Materials ample they compile.
Ye Sons of *Numa's* noble race,
Be wiſe your verſes to ſuppreſs,
Which time and your correcting hand,
Which patience at your own command,
Which thought and judgment ſound have not
Refin'd and to the ſtandard brought.

22. As

22. As fire enthuſiaſtic hath
To fame been aſcertain'd the path,
Democritus declar'd that none
Admittance find to *Helicon*,
But who, by certain ſigns are found
Mad, or in ſome degree unſound.
Hence of our Poets ſome we ſee
Who in this ſtate or wiſh to be,
Or to be thought, and ſo are ſeen
With length of beard and nails unclean:
Baths and all public places ſhun,
To deſarts and retirements run.
Theſe heads to dirt and whim inur'd,
Which by no med'cine can be cur'd,
Thus, without art, acquire the name
Of Poet, and expect the fame.
Fool that I am, the bile to clear
In ſpring, for ſoundneſs all the year:
And were theſe Bards to do the ſame,
They'd never reach the fane of *Fame*;
Nor, were they hellebore to try,
Would better verſes write than I.
Their plan I hold not worth my while,
And ſo purſue my former ſtile.
To ſteel as whetſtones, which impart
The pow'r to cut, but want the art;

How

How far an author's duties reach,
I, nought compoſing, others teach;
Where beſt materials one may find;
What forms and feeds a Poet's mind;
Where elegance, where beauties lie,
Where order, where deformity.

23. All happy compoſitions from
Good ſenſe originate, and come
To form by ev'ry proper rule,
So taught the Academic School.
Words, if you be ſupported ſo,
Will, to your wiſh, ſpontaneous flow.
Who mankind ſtudies claims applauſe;
He characters moſt juſtly draws,
Who knows what to his friend is due,
His country, gueſt and parent too,
What ſenatorial functions, and
The General's uncontrol'd command.
I teach you to obſerve mankind,
'Tis there the rules of life you'll find:
There truth from error to diſcern,
As in a ſchool, attentive learn.
Sometimes a fable, coarſely wrought,
With, here and there, an happy thought,

With

With manners juſt; tho' neither grace,
Nor powers of language it poſſeſs,
Suſpends the audience, and retains,
With artleſs joke, the mind in chains,
More than when actors grave rehearſe
High ſounding and unmeaning verſe.

24. On *Greece*, with genius, wit and ſenſe,
On *Greece* the pow'rs of eloquence
The *Muſe* beſtow'd: *Greece* ever has
Of fame ambitious been and praiſe.
Our Roman youth, with labour taught
To caſt accounts, can tell you what
A pound will, in a year, repay,
And what the intereſt of a day.
" Come, tell me, *Chub*, thou uſurer's ſon,
" Taught in your father's track to run,
" Take from a quincunx one; what then?—
" Why ſo deliberate?—*four remain.*—
" But of a pound what?—Still you ſtare;—
" *A third.* The uſurer's annual ſhare.
" Again add one; ſay what the ſum?—
" *An half*:—preciſely, on you come."
Who by ſuch education can
Bring out the genius of a man?

From

From it no books or fairly bound,
Or in learn'd libraries are found.

25. If Poets trophies wiſh to raiſe,
Let them inſtruct alike and pleaſe:
Point out what are in life for uſe,
And what our ſinking minds amuſe.
When ſhort your work, the docile mind
Will ſtraight your meaning comprehend,
And long retain; for a full breaſt
Throws off refuſe, but keeps the reſt.
Let what you feign for pleaſure's ſake,
A form to truth the neareſt take:
Nor let your whim nor fable crude
Incredibilities intrude.
Thus with my mind I hate to ſtrive;
To think a child now walks alive,
Which late theſe eyes beheld devour'd,
My credit never can afford.
Morality alone invites
Frugal old age, and it delights.
Youth diſſipated ſcarce can bear
Grave compoſitions and auſtere.
The author approbation gains,
From Senators to country ſwains,

Who

Who with utility combines
What cheers the paſſions and refines,
His readers edifying, while
In ſeaſon he provokes a ſmile.
Theſe are the courted volumes, which
Support librarians and enrich;
Which eternize their author's name,
And ſpread thro' diſtant climes his fame.

26. Faults may, which yet a liberal mind
Would hardly wiſh as ſuch to find,
Appear; as a ſwift arrow may,
From the beſt archer, miſs the prey:
Or as a flat the ſounding lyre
Returns, tho' both the hand conſpire
And mind to ſtrike a ſharp. For me
I never ſhall offended be,
Tho' interſpers'd ſome faults be found,
If ſtriking marks of worth abound;
If wit with taſte and morals there
Digeſted artfully appear.
Such faults to human nature ought
To be aſcrib'd or careleſs thought.
But judgment join'd with taſte will ſhow
How far indulgence ought to go.

Few

Few volumes yet are found to be
So bad, but thence or profit we
Or pleaſure may, however ſmall,
Draw; if we read them without gall.
He, who his pen hath often dipp'd
And, tho' adviſ'd, as often tripp'd,
Deſerves the lot of thoſe who bring
Notes jarring from the ſelf ſame ſtring:
If both, without regard to rule,
Perſiſt, their fate is ridicule.
To me ſuch *Chœrilus*, when found
In ſenſe alike and verſe unſound:
I laugh, when from him drop a line
Or two, which all the reſt outſhine;
His weakneſſes I ſoon forget:
But when good *Homer* nods I fret.
In labours of uncommon length,
Sleep may o'ercome our yielding ſtrength.

27. As paintings, whereof ſome appear
Beſt at a diſtance, others near;
Some ſhaded, ſome in ſun-ſhine are
Which the ſevereſt cenſure dare:
So Poets genius, wit and fire
Pleaſe, ſome but once, ſome never tire.

Piſo, tho' in yourſelf you ſhare
Much worth, and from paternal care,
To thee, thou elder Son, I tell
A truth, which claims attention well.
Some things, tho' mean, are not unfit,
And mediocrity admit:
As who unequal at the bar
To *Aulus* or *Meſſala* are,
Have ſtill their merit, are eſteem'd,
And worthy of applauſes deem'd.
But tho' in nature beauties we
Oft from gradations riſing ſee;
With Poets, Gods and men ordain
That no ſuch climax ſhall obtain.
What things in nature, or of art,
Delight us moſt, and cheer the heart,
Are moſt diſguſting when we find
Them bad, and of inferior kind.
As jarring muſic at a feaſt,
Or eſſences to every gueſt
Offenſive, while without the two
The company might mirth purſue;
So *Poetry*, by Heaven deſign'd
To ſolace and deſight the mind,
If once ſhe quit her native ſky,
If on a lab'ring wing ſhe fly,

Tho'

Tho' little now ſhe downwards tend,
We dread ſhe on the ground will end.

28. Who is, from want of ſtrength or art,
Unfit to throw the quoit or dart,
To poiſe the ſpear, to wield the lance,
The chorus join or lead the dance,
Will, ridicule to ſhun and wit
Of others, a ſpectator ſit.
But ſome as Poets needs muſt ſhow,
Tho' Nature never meant them ſo.
" Why ſhould we not, ſince Romans free
" Of fortunes independent we?
" Of Knights we bear unſtain'd the name:
" Such is to poetry our claim."
But wiſely you, my Friend, will tread
Where only taſte and genius lead.
Of compoſitions if a ſtore
You have, digeſted long before,
Of theſe, by judgment prompted, you
Will hazard a ſevere review;
Truſt them to thoſe who faults will ſee,
Your Father, *Metius* or to me.
By length of time alone each line
You'll to the niceſt ear refine.

In

In your poſſeſſion while confin'd
Your labours lie, you to your mind
May poliſh: but to public view
Irrevocably them you ſhew.

29. Thus, ſavage man by *Orpheus* was
Refin'd, and taught the uſe of laws;
Deterr'd from rapine, endleſs ſtrife,
From murders and a brutal life.
Nor lion he nor tyger tam'd,
But mankind; and for that was fam'd.
Amphion too, as hath been told,
Rear'd Theban walls and towers of old;
So ſweet his muſic and his tongue,
The ſtones ſpontaneous mov'd along;
To theſe, or freeze or architrave,
Bewitching ſymmetry he gave.
"What apologue is here compris'd?"—
Man's ſavage mind he humaniz'd.
In early times, it wiſdom was
Man to aſſociate, and by laws
All property to aſcertain;
To mark things ſacred and profane;
Cities to build, and to invent
What good might yield, or ill prevent;

From

From love promiſcuous to reſtrain,
And laws connubial to ordain.
Thus Poets mankind civiliz'd,
They and their labours then were priz'd.
Next *Homer* and *Tyrtæus* came,
Pointing the way to martial fame:
Shew'd what the mind with courage warms
And ſtimulates man to feats of arms.
In verſes oracles divine
Were told, and virtues which refine
The ſoul; by verſe the royal ſmile
We draw; by verſe we time beguile.
From Poets too, to cheer the mind,
Our theatres proviſion find.
That you ſhould be with Poets nam'd
Be therefore, *Piſo*, not aſham'd.

30. Whether we nature find or art
Powers more conducive to impart
To poetry; a problem this
Hath been, and at this moment is.
Art without nature ſeldom we
Or genius rude ſucceſsful ſee.
Thus each the other's aid requires,
To aid the other each conſpires;

And

And Poets by the two to fame
Are rais'd, and eternize their name.
Who honours in *Olympia's* plain
Expects, muſt, while a youth, to pain,
To heats and colds himſelf inure;
For theſe the courted prize inſure:
From wine, from joys of love muſt flee,
From ev'ry lure of luxury.
He much hath ſuffer'd, want of eaſe,
His maſter labour'd much to pleaſe,
Who honour'd is to play along
And join the chorus in the ſong.
Such is our fate, in theſe our days,
That Bards, however low, the bays
May claim: 'tis now enough to cry
None better verſes write than I:
My ignorance to own, or be
Outrun by others ſuit not me.

31. As auctioneers who, bawling loud,
To ſell their wares convene the crowd,
The Poet, who in wealth abounds,
In bonds, in bills and ſpacious grounds,
To their expected feaſt invites,
For adulation, paraſites.

Tho'

Tho' theſe his fawning flatt'rers be
Profuſely entertain'd; tho' he,
Miſled by vanity, become
Surety to creditors for ſome;
Or ſome, engag'd in ſuits of law,
From theſe vexatious fetters draw;
Yet he of them ſhall never know
Which is his friend, or which his foe.
To thoſe, whom preſents bind to you,
Truſt not your works for a review:
Nor will they, who dependent are
On you, your faults as ſuch declare.
Your compoſitions charming all,
Even blemiſhes they'll beauties call:
Nay, tears they'll ſhed, to ſhew how much
Your tender ſtrokes their paſſions touch.
In ecſtaſy at length they'll bound
Upright, and dancing beat the ground.
As thoſe at funerals hir'd to weep,
More tears diſcharge than they who keep
Their grief ſuppreſs'd: ſo is the mind
Deriſive, to a real friend:
That boaſts of ſtrong attachments, this
Void of all oſtentation is.
Some Kings are ſaid their friends to ply
With wine, when them they mean to try;

Whether

Whether they be what they appear,
If falſe their friendſhip, or ſincere.
Be not deceiv'd by thoſe who ſeem
Friends, while their hearts with falſehood teem.

32. Had to our Friend *Quintilius* you
Recited, he'd have told you how
Your work with rigour to correct,
And ev'ry where your numbers check.—
This I, perhaps you'd have replied,
With much attention oft have tried.—
He'd tell you, daſh it, and anew,
With better taſte, your theme purſue.—
" Forgive me, rather than again
" Attempt the taſk, it ſhall remain."—
Farewell then, and enjoy, for me,
Your work and without rivals be.—
A prudent and ingenuous friend
Will lifeleſs verſes reprehend,
Attune the harſh, and, with his pen,
The crude mark to be touch'd again,
Off ornaments ſuperfluous take,
And parts obſcure perſpicuous make;
Will ambiguities explain;
Will this expunge, and that retain:

Himſelf

Himſelf an *Ariſtarchus* he
Thus conſtitutes; nor will he be
So intereſted as contend,
"Shall I officious loſe a friend,
"Or give offence for trifles?"—which,
Know to your coſt, will not be ſuch,
When in the public you appear
Of joke the butt and wanton ſneer.

33. As from the plague, from leproſy,
Mad dogs and lunatics we flee,
The brain-ſick Poet wiſe men ſhun;
Though after him boys raſhly run.
This Poet, who his thoughts and time
Exhauſts purſuing the ſublime,
Who, earth deſpiſing, ever eyes
Aerial objects and the ſkies,
Will ſhare the fate of fowlers, while
Intent the ſky-lark to beguile,
Of pits and draw-wells thoughtleſs, they
To inattention fall a prey:
And, tho' they burſt their lungs, will not
Find aid or one to drag them out:
Or, if ſo friendly any be
This Poet from a pit to free,

Who knows whether he wiſh'd your care,
Or prudent was in going there?

34. Such was, as Grecian tales relate,
The fam'd Sicilian Poet's fate,
Who ardent to immortalize
His name, on wings of *Fame* to riſe
And, yielding to his mad deſire,
Plung'd into *Ætna's* liquid fire.
Let Poets, therefore, end the ſtrife
Of nature, and diſpoſe of life:
Nor is't more criminal to kill
Than mad men ſave againſt their will.
Tho' from this deed, once and again,
Empedocles you might reſtrain;
Would this, think you, his life inſure,
Or ſuch poetic madneſs cure?
Nor yet can one exactly find
Wherefore by heaven his blaſted mind
Hath verſes been condemn'd to write,
And he 'gainſt nature thus to fight;
Whether his ſacrilegious hand
Hath robb'd a fane, or from the land
Of neighbours ſtolen the marks, or hath
Felonious broken plighted faith;

Hath

Hath impious of their gifts beguil'd
The Gods, or parents duſt defil'd.
He frantic raging, as a bear
Unchain'd, nor old nor young doth ſpare:
His verſes ever in his head,
Ever impatient them to read;
Learn'd and unlearn'd purſues, and where
One he can ſeize, he faſtens there;
As doth a leech, which, lank and thin,
Quits not, till cramm'd with blood, the ſkin.

Q. HORATII FLACCI

EPISTOLA

AD

PISONES,

DE

ARTE POETICA.

Q. HORATII FLACCI

EPISTOLA

AD

PISONES

SIVE

ARS POETICA.

Q. HORATII FLACCI

ARS POETICA.

1. HUMANO capiti cervicem pictor equinam
Jungere si velit, et varias inducere plumas
Undique collatis membris, ut turpiter atrum
Desinat in piscem mulier formosa supernè;
Spectatum admissi risum teneatis, amici?
Credite, Pisones, isti tabulæ fore librum
Persimilem, cujus, velut ægri somnia, vanæ
Fingentur species; ut nec pes, nec caput uni
Reddatur formæ. Pictoribus atque poëtis
Quidlibet audendi semper fuit æqua potestas:
Scimus, et hanc veniam petimusq; damusq; vicissim:
Sed non ut placidis coëant immitia; non ut
Serpentes avibus geminentur, tigribus agni.

2. Inceptis gravibus plerumque et magna professis
Purpureus, latè qui splendeat, unus et alter
Assuitur

Affuitur pannus : quum lucus, et ara Dianæ,
Et properantis aquæ per amœnos ambitus agros,
Aut flumen Rhenum, aut pluvius deſcribitur arcus :
Sed nunc non erat his locus ; et fortaſſe cupreſſum
Scis ſimulare : quid hoc, ſi fractis enatat exſpes
Navibus, ære dato qui pingitur ? Amphora cœpit
Inſtitui ; currente rotâ, cur urceus exit ?
Denique ſit quidvis ſimplex duntaxat et unum.

3. Maxima pars vatum, pater et juvenes patre digni,
Decipimur ſpecie recti. Brevis eſſe laboro,
Obſcurus fio : ſectantem lævia nervi
Deficiunt animique : profeſſus grandia turget :
Serpit humi tutus nimiùm timiduſque procellæ :
Qui variare cupit rem prodigialiter unam,
Delphinum ſylvis appingit, fluctibus aprum.
In vitium ducit culpæ fuga, ſi caret arte.
Æmilium circa ludum faber imus et ungues
Exprimet, et molles imitabitur ære capillos :
Infelix operis ſummâ, quia ponere totum
Neſciet. Hunc ego me, ſi quid componere curem,
Non magis eſſe velim, quàm naſo vivere pravo,
Spectandum nigris oculis nigroque capillo.

4. Sumite materiem veſtris, qui ſcribitis, æquam
Viribus ; et verſate diu, quid ferre recuſent,

Quid

Quid valeant humeri. Cui lecta potenter erit res,
Nec facundia deferet hunc, nec lucidus ordo.
Ordinis hæc virtus erit et venus, aut ego fallor,
Ut jam nunc dicat, jam nunc debentia dici
Pleraque differat, et præsens in tempus omittat.
Hoc amet, hoc spernat, promissi carminis auctor.

5. In verbis etiam tenuis cautusque serendis,
Dixeris egregiè, notum si callida verbum
Reddiderit junctura novum. Si fortè necesse est
Indiciis monstrare recentibus abdita rerum;
Fingere cinctutis non exaudita Cethegis
Continget: dabiturque licentia sumpta pudenter;
Et nova factaque nuper habebunt verba fidem, si
Græco fonte cadant, parcè detorta. Quid autem?
Cæcilio Plautoque dabit Romanus, ademtum
Virgilio Varioque? Ego cur, acquirere pauca
Si possum, invideor; quum lingua Catonis et Ennî
Sermonem patrium ditaverit, ac nova rerum
Nomina protulerit?——

6. ——————Licuit semperque licebit
Signatum præsente notâ procudere nomen.
Ut sylvæ foliis pronos mutantur in annos;
Prima cadunt: ita verborum vetus interit ætas,
Et juvenum ritu florent modò nata vigentque.

Debemur morti nos, noſtraque ; ſive receptus
Terrâ Neptunus, claſſes Aquilonibus arcet,
Regis opus ; ſterilisve diu palus, aptaque remis,
Vicinas urbes alit, et grave ſentit aratrum :
Seu curſum mutavit iniquum frugibus amnis,
Doctus iter melius : mortalia facta peribunt ;
Nedum ſermonum ſtet honos et gratia vivax.
Multa renaſcentur, quæ jam cecidere : cadentque
Quæ nunc ſunt in honore vocabula, ſi volet uſus,
Quem penes arbitrium eſt, et jus, et norma loquendi.

7. Res geſtæ regumque ducumque, et triſtia bella,
Quo ſcribi poſſent numero monſtravit Homerus.
Verſibus impariter junctis querimonia primùm,
Poſt etiam inclusa eſt voti ſententia compos.
Quis tamen exiguos elegos emiſerit auctor,
Grammatici certant, et adhuc ſub judice lis eſt.
Archilochum proprio rabies armavit iambo :
Hunc ſocci cepere pedem grandeſque cothurni,
Alternis aptum ſermonibus, et populares
Vincentem ſtrepitus, et natum rebus agendis.
Muſa dedit fidibus divos, puerosque Deorum,
Et pugilem victorem, et equum certamine primum,
Et juvenum curas, et libera vina referre.
Deſcriptas ſervare vices, operumque colores,
Cur ego, ſi nequeo ignoroque, poeta ſalutor ?

Cur

Cur neſcire, pudens pravè, quàm diſcere malo?

8. Verſibus exponi tragicis res comica non vult:
Indignatur item privatis ac prope ſocco
Dignis carminibus narrari cœna Thyeſtæ.
Singula quæque locum teneant ſortita decenter.
Interdum tamen et vocem comœdia tollit;
Iratuſque Chremes tumido delitigat ore,
Et tragicus plerumque dolet ſermone pedeſtri
Telephus ac Peleus, quum pauper et exul uterque
Projicit ampullas ac ſeſquipedalia verba,
Si curat cor ſpectantis tetigiſſe querelâ.

9. Non ſatis eſt pulchra eſſe pœmata; dulcia ſunto,
Et quocunque volent, animum auditoris agunto.
Ut ridentibus arrident, ita flentibus adflent
Humani vultus. Si vis me flere, dolendum eſt
Primùm ipſi tibi: tunc tua me infortunia lædent.
Telephe, vel Peleu, malè ſi mandata loquêris,
Aut dormitabo, aut ridebo. Triſtia mœſtum
Vultum verba decent; iratum, plena minarum;
Ludentem, laſciva; ſeverum, ſeria dictu.
Format enim Natura priùs nos intus ad omnem
Fortunarum habitum: juvat, aut impellit ad iram,
Aut ad humum mœrore gravi deducit, et angit:

Poſt

Poſt effert animi motus interprete linguâ.

10. Si dicentis erunt fortunis abſona dicta,
Romani tollent equites peditesque cachinnum.
Intererit multum Divusne loquatur, an heros;
Maturusne senex, an adhuc florente juventâ
Fervidus; an matrona potens, an ſedula nutrix;
Mercatorne vagus, cultorne virentis agelli;
Colchus, an Aſſyrius; Thebis nutritus, an Argis.
Aut famam ſequere, aut ſibi convenientia finge,
Scriptor. Honoratum ſi forte reponis Achillem,
Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer,
Jura neget ſibi nata, nihil non arroget armis.
Sit Medea ferox invictaque, flebilis Ino,
Perfidus Ixion, Io vaga, triſtis Oreſtes.

11. Si quid inexpertum ſcenae committis, et audes
Perſonam formare novam; ſervetur ad imum
Qualis ab incepto proceſſerit, et ſibi conſtet.
Difficile eſt propriè communia dicere: tuque
Rectius Iliacum carmen deducis in actus,
Quàm ſi proferres ignota indictaque primus.
Publica materies privati juris erit, ſi
Nec circa vilem patulumque moraberis orbem;
Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere fidus
Interpres; nec deſilies imitator in arctum,
Unde pedem referre pudor vetet aut operis lex.

Nec

Nec ſic incipies, ut ſcriptor cyclicus olim:
Fortunam Priami cantabo et nobile bellum.
Quid dignum tanto feret hic promiſſor hiatu?
Parturiunt montes; naſcetur ridiculus mus.

12. Quantò rectiùs hic, qui nil molitur inepte!
Dic mihi, Muſa, virum, captæ poſt tempora Trojæ,
Qui mores hominum multorum vidit et urbes.
Non fumum ex fulgore, ſed ex fumo dare lucem
Cogitat, ut ſpecioſa dehinc miracula promat,
Antiphaten, Scyllamq; et cum Cyclope Charybdin:
Nec reditum Diomedis ab interitu Meleagri,
Nec gemino bellum Trojanum orditur ab ovo.
Semper ad eventum feſtinat; et in medias res,
Non ſecus ac notas, auditorem rapit; et quæ
Deſperat tractata niteſcere poſſe, relinquit:
Atque ita mentitur, ſic veris falſa remiſcet,
Primo ne medium, medio ne diſcrepet imum.

13. Tu, quid ego et populus mecum deſideret, audi.
Si plauſoris eges aulæa manentis, et uſque
Seſſuri, donec cantor, Vos plaudite, dicat:
Ætatis cujuſque notandi ſunt tibi mores,
Mobilibuſque decor naturis dandus et annis.
Reddere qui voces jam ſcit puer, ac pede certo
Signat humum, geſtit paribus colludere, et iram

Colligit

Colligit ac ponit temerè, et mutatur in horas.
Imberbis juvenis, tandem cuſtode remoto,
Gaudet equis canibuſque et aprici gramine campi;
Cereus in vitium flecti, monitoribus aſper,
Utilium tardus proviſor, prodigus æris,
Sublimis, cupiduſque, et amata relinquere pernix.
Converſis ſtudiis, ætas animuſque virilis
Quærit opes et amicitias, inſervit honori;
Commiſiſſe cavet quod mox mutare laboret.

14. Multa ſenem circumveniunt incommoda;
vel quòd
Quærit, et inventis miſer abſtinet, ac timet uti;
Vel quòd res omnes timidè gelidèque miniſtrat,
Dilator, ſpe lentus, iners, paviduſque futuri;
Difficilis, querulus, laudator temporis acti,
Se puero, cenſor caſtigatorque minorum.
Multa ferunt anni venientes commoda ſecum,
Multa recedentes adimunt: ne fortè ſeniles
Mandentur juveni partes, pueroque virîles;
Semper in adjunctis ævoque morabimur aptis.

15. Aut agitur res in ſcenis, aut acta refertur:
Segniùs irritant animos demiſſa per aurem,
Quàm quæ ſunt oculis ſubjecta fidelibus, et quæ
Ipſe ſibi tradit ſpectator. Non tamen intus

Digna

Digna geri promes in ſcenam; multaque tolles
Ex oculis, quæ mox narret facundia præſens:
Ne pueros coram populo Medea trucidet;
Aut humana palam coquat exta nefarius Atreus;
Aut in avem Progne vertatur, Cadmus in anguem.
Quodcunque oſtendis mihi ſic, incredulus odi.
Neve minor, neu ſit quinto productior actu
Fabula, quæ poſci vult, et ſpectata reponi.
Nec Deus interſit, niſi dignus vindice nodus
Inciderit: nec quarta loqui perſona laboret.

16. Actoris partes Chorus, officiumque virile
Defendat: neu quid medios intercinat actus,
Quod non propoſito conducat et hæreat aptè.
Ille bonis faveatque et concilietur amicis;
Et regat iratos, et amet peccare timentes;
Ille dapes laudet menſæ brevis; ille ſalubrem
Juſtitiam, legeſque, et apertis otia portis:
Ille tegat commiſſa, Deoſque precetur et oret,
Ut redeat miſeris, abeat fortuna ſuperbis.
Tibia non, ut nunc, orichalco vincta, tubæque
Æmula; ſed tenuis ſimplexque foramine pauco
Aſpirare et adeſſe choris erat utilis, atque
Nondum ſpiſſâ nimis complere ſedilia flatu:
Quò ſanè populus numerabilis, utpote parvus,
Et frugi caſtuſque verecunduſque coibat.

17. Poſtquam

17. Poſtquam cœpit agros extendere victor, et urbem
Latior amplecti murus, vinoque diurno
Placari Genius feſtis impunè diebus;
Acceſſit numeriſque modiſque licentia major.
Indoctus quid enim ſaperet liberque laborum,
Ruſticus urbano confuſus, turpis honeſto?
Sic priſcæ motumque et luxuriem addidit arti
Tibicen, traxitque vagus per pulpita veſtem:
Sic etiam fidibus voces crevere ſeveris,
Et tulit eloquium inſolitum facundia præceps;
Utiliumque ſagax rerum, ac divina futuri,
Sortilegis non diſcrepuit ſententia Delphis.
Carmine qui tragico vilem certavit ob hircum,
Mox etiam agreſtes Satyros nudavit, et aſper
Incolumi gravitate jocum tentavit: eo quòd
Illecebris erat et grata novitate morandus
Spectator functuſque ſacris, et potus, et exlex.
Verum ita riſores, et commendare dicaces
Conveniet Satyros, ita vertere ſeria ludo;
Ne quicunque Deus, quicunque adhibebitur heros
Regali conſpectus in auro nuper et oſtro,
Migret in obſcuras humili ſermone tabernas:
Aut, dum vitat humum, nubes et inania captet.

18. Effutire

18. Effutire leves indigna tragœdia verſus,
Ut feſtis matrona moveri juſſa diebus,
Intererit Satyris paulùm pudibunda protervis.
Non ego inornata et dominantia nomina ſolùm
Verbaque, Piſones, Satyrorum ſcriptor amabo:
Nec ſic enitar tragico differre colori;
Ut nihil interſit Davuſne loquatur et audax
Pythias emuncto lucrata Simone talentum,
An cuſtos famuluſque Dei Silenus alumni.
Ex noto fictum carmen ſequar: ut ſibi quivis
Speret idem; ſudet multùm, fruſtraque laboret
Auſus idem: tantùm ſeries juncturaque pollet:
Tantùm de medio ſumptis accedit honoris.

19. Sylvis deducti caveant, me judice, Fauni,
Ne velut innati triviis, ac penè forenſes,
Aut nimiùm teneris juvenentur verſibus umquam,
Aut immunda crepent ignominioſaque dicta.
Offenduntur enim, quibus eſt equus, et pater, et res;
Nec, ſi quid fricti ciceris probat et nucis emtor,
Æquis accipiunt animis, donantve coronâ.
Syllaba longa brevi ſubjecta, vocatur Iambus,
Pes citus: unde etiam Trimetris adcreſcere juſſit
Nomen Iambeis, quum ſenos redderet ictus
Primus ad extremum ſimilis ſibi: non ita pridem,
Tardior ut paulò graviorque veniret ad aures,

Spondeos ſtabiles in jura paterna recepit
Commodus et patiens: non ut de ſede ſecundâ
Cederet, aut quartâ ſocialiter. Hic et in Accî
Nobilibus Trimetris apparet rarus, et Ennî.
In ſcenam miſſus cum magno pondere verſus,
Aut operæ celeris nimiùm curâque carentis,
Aut ignoratæ premit artis crimine turpi.
Non quivis videt immodulata poëmata judex:
Et data Romanis venia eſt indigna poetis.
Idcircone vager, ſcribamque licenter? ut omnes
Viſuros peccata putem mea; tutus, et intra
Spem veniæ cautus? vitavi denique culpam,
Non laudem merui.

Vos exemplaria Græca
Nocturnâ verſate manu, verſate diurnâ.
At noſtri proavi Plautinos et numeros et
Laudavere ſales; nimiùm patienter utrumque
(Ne dicam ſtultè) mirati: ſi modò ego et vos
Scimus inurbanum lepido ſeponere dicto,
Legitimumque ſonum digitis callemus et aure.
Ignotum tragicæ genus inveniſſe Camenæ
Dicitur, et plauſtris vexiſſe poëmata Theſpis
Quæ canerent agerentque, peruncti fæcibus ora.
Poſt hunc perſonæ pallæque repertor honeſtæ
Æſchylus, et modicis inſtravit pulpita tignis,

Et

Et docuit magnumque loqui, nitique cothurno.

21. Succeſſit vetus his Comœdia, non ſine multâ
Laude: ſed in vitium libertas excidit, et vim
Dignam lege regi: lex eſt accepta; choruſque
Turpiter obticuit, ſublato jure nocendi.
Nil intentatum noſtri liquere poetæ:
Nec minimum meruere decus, veſtigia Græca
Auſi deſerere, et celebrare domeſtica facta,
Vel qui Prætextas, vel qui docuere Togatas.
Nec virtute foret clariſve potentius armis,
Quàm linguâ, Latium; ſi non offenderet unumquemque poetarum limæ labor et mora. Vos, ô
Pompilius ſanguis, carmen reprehendite, quod non
Multa dies et multa litura coërcuit, atque
Præfectum decies non caſtigavit ad unguem.

22. Ingenium miſerâ quia fortunatius arte
Credit, et excludit ſanos Helicone poetas
Democritus; bona pars non ungues ponere curat,
Non barbam; ſecreta petit loca, balnea vitat.
Nanciſcetur enim pretium nomenque poetæ,
Si tribus Anticyris caput inſanabile numquam
Tonſori Licino commiſerit. O ego lævus,
Qui purgor bilem ſub verni temporis horam!
Non alius faceret meliora poemata: verùm

Nil

Nil tanti eſt. Ergo fungar vice cotis, acutum
Reddere quæ ferrum valet, exſors ipſa ſecandi.
Munus et officium, nil ſcribens ipſe, docebo;
Unde parentur opes; quid alat formetque poetam;
Quid deceat, quid non; quò virtus, quò ferat error.

23. Scribendi rectè, ſapere eſt et principium et fons.
Rem tibi Socraticæ poterunt oſtendere chartæ;
Verbaque proviſam rem non invita ſequentur.
Qui didicit patriæ quid debeat, et quid amicis;
Quo ſit amore parens, quo frater amandus et hoſpes;
Quod ſit conſcripti, quod judicis officium; quæ
Partes in bellum miſſi ducis; ille profectò
Reddere perſonæ ſcit convenientia cuique.
Reſpicere exemplar vitæ morumque jubebo
Doctem imitatorem, et vivas hinc ducere voces.
Interdum ſpecioſa locis, morataque rectè
Fabula, nullius veneris, ſine pondere et arte,
Valdiùs oblectat populum, meliuſque moratur,
Quàm verſus inopes rerum, nugæque canoræ.

24. Graiis ingenium, Graiis dedit ore rotundo
Muſa loqui, præter laudem, nullius avaris.
Romani pueri longis rationibus aſſem
Diſcunt in partes centum diducere. Dicat
Filius Albini, ſi de quinçunce remota eſt
Uncia,

Uncia, quid ſuperet? Poteras dixiſſe, triens? Eu!
Rem poteris ſervare tuam. Redit uncia: quid fit?
Semis. An hæc animos ærugo et cura peculî
Cum ſemel imbuerit, ſperamus carmina fingi
Poſſe linenda cedro, et levi ſervanda cupreſſo?

25. Aut prodeſſe volunt, aut delectare poetæ;
Aut ſimul et jucunda et idonea dicere vitæ.
Quidquid præcipies, eſto brevis: ut citò dicta
Percipiant animi dociles, teneantque fideles.
Omne ſupervacuum pleno de pectore manat.
Ficta voluptatis cauſâ ſint proxima veris:
Ne, quodcumque volet, poſcat ſibi fabula credi;
Neu pranſæ Lamiæ vivum puerum extrahat alvo.
Centuriæ ſeniorum agitant expertia frùgis:
Celſi prætereunt auſtera poemata Rhamnes.
Omne tulit punctum, qui miſcuit utile dulci,
Lectorem delectando, pariterque monendo.
Hic meret æra liber Soſiis, hic et mare tranſit,
Et longum noto ſcriptori prorogat ævum.

26. Sunt delicta tamen, quibus ignoviſſe velimus:
Nam neque chorda ſonum reddit, quem vult manus et mens;
Poſcentique gravem perſæpe remittit acutum:
Nec ſemper feriet, quodcumque minabitur, arcus.

Verùm

Verùm ubi plura nitent in carmine, non ego paucis
Offendar maculis, quas aut incuria fudit,
Aut humana parum cavit natura. Quid ergo eſt?
Ut ſcriptor ſi peccat idem librarius uſque,
Quamvis eſt monitus, veniâ caret; ut citharœdus
Ridetur, chordâ qui ſemper oberrat eâdem:
Sic mihi qui multùm ceſſat, fit Chœrilus ille,
Quem bis terve bonum, cum riſu miror; et idem
Indignor, quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus.
Verùm operi longo fas eſt obrepere ſomnum.

27. Ut pictura, poeſis: erit quæ, ſi propiùs ſtes,
Te capiat magis; et quædam, ſi longiùs abſtes:
Hæc amat obſcurum; volet hæc ſub luce videri,
Judicis argutum quæ non formidat acumen:
Hæc placuit ſemel; hæc decies repetita placebit.
O major juvenum, quamvis et voce paternâ
Fingeris ad rectum, et per te ſapis; hoc tibi dictum
Tolle memor: certis medium et tolerabile rebus
Rectè concedi: conſultus juris, et actor
Cauſarum mediocris, abeſt virtute diſerti
Meſſallæ, nec ſcit quantùm Caſcellius Aulus;
Sed tamen in pretio eſt: mediocribus eſſe poetis
Non homines, non Dî, non conceſſere columnæ.
Ut gratas inter menſas ſymphonia diſcors,
Et craſſum unguentum, et Sardo cum melle papaver
Offendunt;

Offendunt; poterat duci quia cœna ſine iſtis:
Sic animis natum inventumque poëma juvandis,
Si paulùm ſummo deceſſit, vergit ad imum.

28. Ludere qui neſcit, campeſtribus abſtinet armis;
Indoctuſque pilæ, diſcive, trochive, quieſcit;
Ne ſpiſſæ riſum tollant impune coronæ:
Qui neſcit verſus, tamen audet fingere. Quid ni?
Liber et ingenuus, præſertim cenſus equeſtrem
Summam nummorum, vitioque remotus ab omni.
Tu nihil invitâ dices facieſve Minervâ:
Id tibi judicium eſt, ea mens. Si quid tamen olim
Scripſeris, in Metî deſcendat judicis aures,
Et patris, et noſtras; nonumque prematur in annum.
Membranis intus poſitis, delere licebit
Quod non ediderîs: neſcit vox miſſa reverti.

29. Sylveſtres homines ſacer interpreſque Deorum
Cædibus ac victu fœdo deterruit Orpheus;
Dictus ob hoc lenire tigres rabidoſque leones.
Dictus et Amphion, Thebanæ conditor arcis,
Saxa movere ſono teſtudinis, et prece blandâ
Ducere quò vellet. Fuit hæc ſapientia quondam,
Publica privatis ſecernere, ſacra profanis;
Concubitu prohibere vago; dare jura maritis;
Oppida moliri; leges incidere ligno.

Sic

Sic honor et nomen divinis vatibus atque
Carminibus venit. Poſt hos inſignis Homerus
Tyrtæuſque mares animos in martia bella
Verſibus exacuit. Dictæ per carmina ſortes,
Et vitæ monſtrata via eſt; et gratia regum
Pieriis tentata modis; luduſque repertus,
Et longorum operum finis; ne fortè pudori
Sit tibi Muſa lyræ ſolers, et cantor Apollo.

30. Natura fieret laudabile carmen, an arte,
Quæſitum eſt. Ego nec ſtudium ſine divite venâ,
Nec rude quid proſit video ingenium: alterius ſic
Altera poſcit opem res, et conjurat amicè.
Qui ſtudet optatam curſu contingere metam,
Multa tulit fecitque puer; ſudavit et alſit;
Abſtinuit Venere et vino. Qui Pythia cantat
Tibicen, didicit priùs, extimuitque magiſtrum.
Nunc ſatis eſt dixiſſe; Ego mira poemata pango:
Occupet extremum ſcabies: mihi turpe relinqui eſt,
Et, quod non didici, ſanè neſcire fateri.

31. Ut præco, ad merces turbam qui cogit emendas;
Aſſentatores jubet ad lucrum ire poeta
Dives agris, dives poſitis in fœnore nummis.
Si verò eſt, unctum qui rectè ponere poſſit,

Et

Et ſpondere levi pro paupere, et eripere atris
Litibus implicitum; mirabor, ſi ſciet inter-
noſcere mendacem verumque beatus amicum.
Tu ſeu donaris, ſeu quid donare voles cui,
Nolito ad verſus tibi factos ducere plenum
Lætitiæ: clamabit enim; Pulchrè, bene, rectè!
Palleſcet; ſuper his etiam ſtillabit amicis
Ex oculis rorem; ſaliet, tundet pede terram.
Ut qui conducti plorant in funere, dicunt
Et faciunt prope plura dolentibus ex animo; ſic
Deriſor vero plus laudatore movetur.
Reges dicuntur multis urgere culullis,
Ac torquere mero, quem perſpexiſſe laborent
An ſit amicitiâ dignus. Si carmina condes,
Nunquam te fallant animi ſub vulpe latentes.

32. Quintilio ſi quid recitares: Corrige, ſodes,
Hoc, aiebat, et hoc. Meliùs te poſſe negares,
Bis terque expertum fruſtra: delere jubebat,
Et malè tornatos incudi reddere verſus.
Si defendere delictum, quàm vertere, malles;
Nil ultra verbi, aut operæ inſumebat inanis,
Quin ſine rivali teque et tua ſolus amares.
Vir bonus ac prudens verſus reprehendet inertes;
Culpabit duros; incomptis adlinet atrum
Tranſverſo calamo ſignum; ambitioſa recidet

Ornamenta; parum claris lucem dare coget;
Arguet ambiguè dictum; mutanda notabit;
Fiet Ariſtarchus; nec dicet, Cur ego amicum
Offendam in nugis? Hæ nugæ ſeria ducent
In mala deriſum ſemel, exceptumque ſiniſtrè.

33. Ut mala quem ſcabies aut morbus regius urget,
Aut fanaticus error, et iracunda Diana;
Veſanum tetigiſſe timent fugiuntque poëtam,
Qui ſapiunt: agitant pueri, incautique ſequuntur.
Hic dum ſublimes verſus ructatur, et errat,
Si veluti merulis intentus decidit auceps
In puteum, foveamve; licet, Succurrite, longum
Clamet, Io cives; non ſit qui tollere curet.
Si quis curet opem ferre, et demittere funem;
Quî ſcis, an prudens huc ſe projecerit, atque
Servari nolit? ——

34. —— Dicam, Siculique poëtæ
Narrabo interitum. Deus immortalis haberi
Dum cupit Empedocles, ardentem frigidus Ætnam
Inſiluit. Sit jus, liceatque perire poëtis.
Invitum qui ſervat, idem facit occidenti.
Nec ſemel hoc fecit; nec ſi retractus erit, jam
Fiet homo, et ponet famoſæ mortis amorem.
Nec ſatis apparet, cur verſus factitet; utrum

Minxerit

Minxerit in patrios cineres, an triſte bidental
Moverit inceſtus: certè furit, ac velut urſus
Objectos caveæ valuit ſi frangere clathros,
Indoctum doctumque fugat recitator acerbus.
Quem verò arripuit, tenet, occiditque legendo,
Non miſſura cutem, niſi plena cruoris, hirudo.

OBSER-

OBSERVATIONS AND NOTES,

CRITICAL AND EXPLANATORY,

ON

HORACE'S EPISTLE TO THE PISOS.

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HORACE's EPISTLE TO THE PISOS.

1. THE *Piſo*, to whom, with his two ſons, *Horace's* Epiſtle on the Art of Poetry is addreſſed, is, as hath been generally believed, the *Lucius Piſo* ſo highly characterized by *Paterculus* in his ſecond book. There were others of the Calpurnian family, likewiſe contemporaries of *Horace*, particularly one who was at the battle of *Philippi*, expoſed to the ſame dangers with *Horace* there, and afterwards, as well as the Poet, pardoned and received into favour by *Auguſtus*. This *Piſo* was a man of a cruel diſpoſition, and neither he, nor any of that name in the Auguſtan period, could lay claim to a character ſo favourable as that of *Lucius*. He was a man of abilities as a politician, of a refined taſte, and a good ſcholar. He was

Conſul

Conſul when *Horace* was fifty or fifty-one years of age; that is, in the year of *Rome* 738, and fifteen years before the Chriſtian æra. This *Piſo* ſurvived *Horace* about thirty years.

Some of the commentators make *Horace*, in the opening of his Poem, deſcribe two diſtinct monſters; one having a man's head, with an horſe's neck, and diſproportioned members, covered with various feathers: the other figure, a beautiful woman from the waiſt upwards, terminating in a fiſh's tail. This conjecture is plauſible, ſuppoſing the conjunction *ut* in the third verſe, to be changed into *aut*. But as this correction is not ſupported by the authority of any manuſcript, that I know, the common reading is retained in the preceding Verſion.

The ancient manuſcripts having no marks, as inverted commas, Italic, or other characters, to let us know when a ſecond or third perſon ſpeaks, or when a continued diſcourſe is changed into dialogue, have given riſe to uncertainties, and to various interpretations of the ſame paſſages. This has been the fate of the paſſage, *pictoribus atque poetis*, and the two following verſes. Lord *Roſcommon* and Mr *Dacier*, ſuppoſing, with ſome other Tranſlators, theſe verſes to be the apology made to *Horace* by the bad Poets, would make *Horace* interrupt them by the word *ſcimus*. But it would appear more probable, that the verbs *ſcimus*, *petimus*

petimus and *damus*, come all from the ſame perſon: nor doth there appear any impropriety in ſuppoſing the whole to be from *Horace* alone; as if he had ſaid, "Notwithſtanding theſe obſervations, I know that "great latitude is allowed to Poets and Painters, and "reciprocal indulgences paſs between us. But ſtill "we ought not to ſtep ſo far beyond nature, as to "render our works abſurd or ridiculous." In this ſenſe I take the *quidlibet audendi* of *Horace* to ſignify no more than the *fœcunda licentia vatum* of *Ovid*.

From this firſt paragraph of the Poem it appears that *Horace* conſidered Nature as the ſtandard of propriety. Nor can any thing mark it more than an animal body, the different members of which, being ſubſervient to one another, co-operate to the ſame end. Hence we naturally draw the idea of unity; in conſtituting which, that we may obtain beauty, variety becomes likewiſe neceſſary. This obſervation might be illuſtrated from numberleſs examples in nature, particularly from animal and vegetable bodies. *Horace*, therefore, in the opening of his poem, judiciouſly lets us in to his idea of impropriety in compoſitions of whatever kind, by the picture of a Monſter, the members of which, having no relation, but ſtanding in oppoſition to one another, cannot be ſuppoſed to act without general diſorder.

2. *Horace* complains of the Poets of his time, who, in works of greater extent, interſperſed deſcriptions, which, though having merit in themſelves, were foreign to the great deſign; and the general compoſition was thus rendered a piece of patchwork. Hence we may judge how far art, judgment, and delicacy, are requiſite in conducting Epiſodes with propriety. The critics are not wholly agreed about the nature of Epiſodes. The fable of an Epic Poem may, for the moſt part, be comprehended in a few ſentences. *Achilles*, in conſequence of the injury done him by *Agamemnon*, retires from the camp of the Greeks. During his abſence, the Grecian army is brought to the brink of ruin. He obſtinately refuſes to join the Greeks: but, clothing his friend *Patroclus* with his own armour, allows him to go to their aſſiſtance. This hero is ſoon killed by *Hector*, who carries off the armour of *Achilles*. *Achilles*, ſtimulated by the paſſion of revenge, returns to the Greeks, kills *Hector*, and recovers his armour. This is the fable of the Iliad: and whatever elſe appears in that poem is reducible to machinery, to incidents, or to epiſodes. Every epiſode is an incident; but every incident is not an epiſode.

An epiſode, therefore, I ſhould take to be an incident tending to promote the plot and general action; but not neceſſary in the fable. It would be an eaſy matter to illuſtrate this idea of an epiſode from *Homer* and *Virgil*, both which Poets excel in this important branch.

branch. Let the following examples ſuffice. When *Helen* points out and gives the characters of the Grecian heroes to *Priam* on the walls of *Troy*, we feel ourſelves, from that account, intereſted in the fate of theſe chiefs, and we henceforth long to ſee them in action. When the mind of a reader is fatigued with the tumults and ſlaughter of battles, a relief is occaſionally requiſite. The nocturnal adventures of *Diomed* and *Ulyſſes* in *Homer*, and *Virgil's* happy imitation of this epiſode in *Niſus* and *Euryalus*, anſwer this purpoſe fully, and make a judicious change of ſcenery. The laſt interview of *Hector* and *Andromache* is one of the moſt beautiful epiſodes that ever was invented by a Poet. Whether *Homer* hath introduced it at a proper time, hath been doubted.

If an epiſode be highly wrought, much extended, and, in general, the execution ſuperior to the body of the poem, while, at the ſame time, it neither hath a due relation to the fable, nor tends to promote the general action, the reader's mind will hardly fail, in ſuch a caſe, to be diverted from, or will return with reluctance to, the leſs laboured parts of the poem. Thus the epiſodes may be ſaid to obſcure the fable. Improprieties of this kind are juſtly compared to a ſhipwreck in painting, where the artiſt, indulging his fancy, and meaning to enrich the piece, covers ſome intereſting part of the ſea ſcenery by the unſeaſonable introduction of a favourite tree in the foreground.

3. Though

3. Though *Horace* ſpeaks here only of Poets, ſome of the faults with which he charges them, particularly obſcurity ariſing from a laboured and affected brevity, are to be found in compoſitions of all kinds. Authors will find quarter with their readers when the ſubjects they treat are of an abſtract or metaphyſical nature, even though the obſcurity in ſuch compoſitions proceed, in part, from the language of the author: for the reader coming at truth in the end, holds that a compenſation for his labour, and is willing to make allowance for the difficulties which are found in treating theſe ſubjects. But obſcurity in poetical compoſitions never will, and never ought to find indulgence: for if obſcurity ariſe from the nature of the ſubject, that ſubject ought to have been treated, not in verſe, but in proſe. Poetical obſcurity, therefore, may be preſumed to have merited the Poet's reprobation no leſs than poetical mediocrity.

In verſe 26. it ſeems not greatly to matter whether we adopt the word *lenia* or *lævia*, ſuppoſing this latter to ſignify light as well as ſmooth bodies. The former is generally preferred. But *Horace* cannot be charged with impropriety, in aſſuming a poetical licence ſo far as to ſuppoſe even a vigorous and animated perſon to waſte his powers in hunting butterflies, or any light object floating in the air. By either of the words, a Poet is ſuppoſed to purſue objects, of which he cannot, in any degree, avail himſelf. In the verſion, therefore, a

term

term is assumed equally applicable to either of these Latin words.

The false sublime is the next fault mentioned. Without dwelling on this subject, we may observe that a Critic would not hazard much, were he to declare that, since the days of *Homer*, no Epic Poem, five or six excepted, hath appeared, in which the false sublime is not to be found. In the 28th verse, the Poet doth not refer to a sea-storm, as the commentators seem generally to think; but merely to a greater or less elevation in the air.

Among the different poetical departments, there are none whose limits claim the Poet's attention more than those of the marvellous. It is no less necessary that a reader be attentive to the age in which the Poet lived, to his country, to the manners and customs, and particularly to the religion of his times. *Homer* hath been condemned as passing the bounds of the marvellous, in giving speech to the horses of *Achilles*. But *Virgil* and other ancient Poets are not open to censure for making ghosts speak from sepulchral monuments, or deities from trees, groves, and rivers; because, with the ancients, these were considered as articles of religion. Among the moderns, even the distance of a century or two merits attention, if we would judge of the propriety of poetical compositions, or would read them with pleasure and advantage. In *Tasso's* time, which

which is but two centuries ago, it was impious to doubt of the powers of ſpells and incantations, of apparitions and viſions, or of the operations of demons and ghoſts. That Poet, therefore, in his *Jeruſalem delivered*, hath availed himſelf much of this ſort of machinery; which, making a great ſhare of the popular creed of the times, was then well received. The import of the two verſes 29th and 30th, is akin to the diſſuaſive which the Poet had given in the 12th and 13th. In order to generalize the Poet's idea in all theſe verſes, the liberty is taken to add in the Verſion the verſe, *Perverting truth*, &c.

In this paragraph the Poet enumerates a ſtring of faults, to which Poets of every deſcription have been found liable. It is evident that any of theſe defects or errors might, with equal advantage, have been placed firſt, laſt, or in the middle. The ſame obſervation may be applied to different parts of the poem.

4. The knowledge of one's ſelf, as it is among the moſt important, hath in all ages been held one of the moſt difficult acquiſitions of the human mind. Poetry, perhaps more than any other of the arts, ſerves to prove the truth of this obſervation. One cannot venture to form ſo much as a conjecture, what may have been the number of Epic Poems ſince *Homer* ſet the example, to the preſent time, a period of two thouſand five hundred years or upwards. But in one circumſtance

cumſtance we are well aſcertained, that a very ſmall number of theſe hath eſcaped the reprobation of the public. Hence appears the importance of *Horace's* recommendation to authors, to make a proper eſtimate of their own powers, and of the difficulties attending the taſks they mean to undertake.

The moſt natural method for Poets to proceed, would be to begin by making efforts in the ſmaller departments of their art. This was the method followed by the two great Epic Poets of antiquity, if the ſmall poetical pieces, commonly aſcribed to them, be really theirs. *Homer*, ſoon conſcious of his powers, and ſtimulated, as we may believe, by that fire which appears every where in the *Iliad*, would not heſitate long to enter upon this great work. But *Virgil*, from his natural modeſty and reſerve, proceeded by ſlower ſteps from Paſtorals to Georgics, and from them to the *Æneid*.

Later times furniſh an example of the bad effects of a contrary courſe. *Sir Richard Blackmore*, probably with little or no previous trial of his poetical talents, boldly undertook an Epic Poem; and, notwithſtanding the ridicule of the beſt Poets of his time, he perſiſted in repeated attempts of the ſame kind. At length he found a ſubject ſuited to his genius, with which he ought to have begun. Having drawn upon himſelf the character of a bad Poet, his *Creation* hath not met with

with public approbation equal to its merit. This poem is philoſophical, argumentative, deſcriptive, and didactic. Its compoſition would have proved a taſk too hard for thoſe Poets, who never failed to make him the object of their ridicule when they found opportunities. *Dryden*, *Pope*, and *Gay*, we have reaſon to believe, were not ſufficiently acquainted with the Newtonian philoſophy to venture on ſuch a compoſition as *Blackmore's Creation*. Had this poem, excepting ſuch parts of it as relate to the Chriſtian ſyſtem, appeared in ancient *Rome* as an anſwer to *Lucretius*, it would probably have been well received, particularly by the Academics and the Stoics: and though the language in Latin had been no more than equal to its preſent Engliſh dreſs, it would have come to us as one of the moſt valuable remains of antiquity. It is not improbable that the Cardinal *de Polignac* availed himſelf of this poem in compoſing his *Anti Lucretius*.

In verſe 40th, ſome of the Critics would ſubſtitute *pudenter* for *potenter*. *Horace*, from a delicacy of taſte, commonly avoids repeating the ſame word, when the diſtance between the two is not great, unleſs the words be mere particles. The word *pudenter* appears in verſe 51ſt. Beſides, *potenter*, marking bodily ſtrength, properly refers to the paſſage immediately before, which conveys to us the idea of one making trial of his ſtrength, by poiſing a weight on his ſhoulders.

Horace,

Horace, in verſes 43d and 44th, points out, as hath been generally obſerved, wherein the arrangement of the materials of Tragedy and of the Epic ought to differ from that of Hiſtory. It hath been propoſed, I do not recollect by what old Commentator, to change the ſecond *nunc* in verſe 43d into *non*, ſo that the ſenſe of the paſſage would be, "Ut jam dicat quæ nunc de-"bent dici, jam differat, et, in præſens tempus, omit-"tat pleraque quæ nunc *non* debent dici." It is indeed not uncommon in the Latin as well as in other languages, when a word appears early in a ſentence, to leave the reader to ſupply that word again when neceſſary. This is the caſe with the word *debentia* in the ſentence before us, as ſome Critics have obſerved; and this Commentator, conſidering the negative particle as of greater importance than the ſecond *nunc*, leaves the reader to ſupply this latter particle, if he think proper. The Commentator might perhaps obſerve, in ſupport of this emendation, that, though it would be abſurd, had the Poet's addreſs been to readers of epic or tragic compoſition who are in conſtant expectation of the cataſtrophe; it is, nevertheleſs, proper, ſince the addreſs is evidently to Authors, who, by a due attention to this *lucidus ordo*, are ſuppoſed to know what materials ought to have a place now, and what *ought not* to be introduced till a future opportunity. But this apology is ſtill inſufficient: for the paſſage, with the negative particle, would ſignify no more than that every Author ought to arrange his

materials with propriety; a truth too obvious to be introduced with the expreſſion of doubt, *Aut ego fallor.*

The 45th verſe might, without impropriety, follow the 46th verſe, as Dr *Bentley* propoſes. But in this caſe it would refer only to words. Whereas, as it now ſtands, and as it is found in all the Manuſcripts, it refers to incidents, which is more agreeable to the ſenſe of the paſſage.

5. The Commentators are not agreed about the Author's meaning in the paſſage, *notum ſi callida verbum reddiderit junctura novum.* This difference of ſentiments ariſes chiefly from the import of the word *junctura.* It hath been the common opinion of Interpreters, that *Horace*, by this paſſage, underſtands the joining of two words in order to form a third of a ſignification different from either of the former two, as *velivolum, ſolivagus*, and the like. This ſeems to be a ſenſe too reſtricted for verſes introduced with the parade of *dixeris egregie.* Beſides, the fabrication of new words by the junction of others, which have been long in uſe, is allowed to be a bold and dangerous innovation in language.

I ſhould, therefore, think the Poet intended here the affixing of a new and figurative meaning to a word formerly known. Thus, the literal ſenſe of the word *milk* is univerſally known: but, when *Shakeſpeare* joins

joins it to human kindneſs, by acquiring a figurative meaning, it becomes a new word; and this junction may, without impropriety, be ſaid *reddere notum verbum novum*. Again, a *firebrand* is known to ſignify literally a burning coal: but, whoever firſt applied it to a turbulent citizen, noted for kindling diſſention in the ſtate, and, by the propriety of his expreſſion, rendered his meaning perſpicuous, this perſon in ſo far affixed a new meaning to an old word.

What renders this interpretation more probable is, that the Romans were ſo jealous of the purity of their language, and ſo delicate with reſpect to innovations, that, in the ſpace of two centuries preceding the Auguſtan age, and perhaps more, we are aſſured there were not above a dozen of words introduced into the Latin tongue, notwithſtanding the number of Authors of refined taſte who flouriſhed within that period. *Horace* himſelf is believed to have been one of a ſociety appointed by *Auguſtus* to examine literary compoſitions, to decide of competitions in works of genius, and to prevent a corruption of taſte; and the compounding of old words is known to be an encroachment on language as well as the introduction of new words. *Horace* adhered religiouſly to words approved by long uſe, nor did any author avoid innovations in language more than he. Further, *Horace* hath not been excelled by any Poet in a bold, poetical, and figurative mode of expreſſion, for which *Quintilian* declares him

to

to be *variis figuris et verbis feliciſſime audax*. *Horace*, therefore, would naturally recommend to others what he himſelf had found by experience ſo ſucceſsful.

Horace complains that he, with the Authors of his time, did not enjoy the ſame licence of introducing new words into the Roman language, which had been granted to Authors in former times. It ſeems, however, reaſonable that, in the earlier periods of a ſtate, while language is yet barren, men of taſte and genius ſhould be indulged in innovations of this kind, more than afterwards when a language hath reached a high pitch of refinement. This complaint of the Poet may be accounted for in different ways. When one is diſtinguiſhed by a ſuperiority of talents in any particular art, he ſeldom fails to draw upon himſelf the envy of others who profeſs the ſame art. This hath been obſerved to obtain among Poets perhaps more than among Authors of any other deſcription. *Horace*, *Virgil*, and *Varius*, had their *Bavii* and *Mævii*, as *Dryden* and *Pope* had their *Settles* and *Curls*; and *Moliere*, while he drew the court of *Verſailles* and the crowds of *Paris* to his theatre, was attacked by Dramatiſts of all kinds, as corrupting the language, and violating the laws of the Drama. Though, therefore, the three Roman Poets would diſregard, as we may believe, thoſe inferior Bards; their Satyre might ſtill be ſufficient to draw ſuch a complaint from *Horace*. But without having recourſe to mere detractors, it is ſufficiently aſcertained,

ed, that the more refined an age is, it is proportionally the more cenſorious. In the Auguſtan age, Critics were more abundant, than in the days of *Ennius*; as they abound more in *Britain* at preſent, than two or three centuries ago.

6. *Horace* having, with much poetical elegance, beſtowed ſome verſes on the general inſtability of human affairs, concludes that the fluctuating ſtate of language ariſes chiefly from cuſtom. As it is in vain to expect a perfect language, it is out of the power of any nation to aſcertain when the language hath ariſen to its higheſt degree of purity; that is, whether it may ſtill make advances towards perfection, or its decline be already begun. It therefore becomes an important matter to learn critically the cauſes of the degeneracy of language. The diſcovery of this criterion is attended with the greater difficulty, that what frequently paſſes for improvements and elegancies is the chief cauſe of corruption.

The nearer any thing approaches to perfection, its further improvement becomes leſs neceſſary, and more difficult. For, as redundancies are to be avoided, additions can be but few, and the choice of theſe ought to be made with delicacy. Among other things, this is the caſe with language. Hence, in a rude ſtate, its defects being obvious, improvements by neceſſary additions are no leſs ſo. Luxury hath been commonly obſerved

ſerved to prevail in a ſtate when language hath reached a high degree of refinement. But the paſſion for novelty which attends luxury, ſeldom if ever fails to extend to language. New, and frequently foreign words, are unneceſſarily introduced: the ſenſe of words formerly in uſe is perverted, and ſimplicity with eaſe in phraſeology is ſacrificed for labour and affectation.

Such is the force of cuſtom, according to *Horace's* obſervation, that it is impoſſible wholly to prevent theſe evils. The advantages ariſing from a ſtandard for preſerving languages in a ſtate of purity, are evident. Had it been poſſible to fix the Greek language as it was from the time of *Pericles* to that of *Demoſthenes*, and the Latin language as in the Auguſtan age, it had been better than for the ſubſequent authors to attempt further degrees of refinement. Nor is it improbable that the ſociety, eſtabliſhed by *Auguſtus*, had it been continued, would have been of ſingular uſe in preſerving, if not in improving, the purity of the Latin tongue. But the ſeven ſucceeding Emperors were more than ſufficient to unhinge the beſt conſtituted government.

Among the moderns we have ſeen ſocieties eſtabliſhed for fixing ſtandards of languages. Some of theſe ſocieties, particularly in *Italy*, have been ſucceſsful, at leaſt as far as elubricity of language would permit. Whether the purity of the Engliſh language can be preſerved,

preſerved, or its decline retarded, by ſuch a ſociety, is problematic. Dr *Johnſon's* objections to it, in his life of Lord *Roſcommon*, are not trivial. Meantime, the good reception which the Dictionary of that ingenious author hath found with the public, gives ground to hope that a ſociety having the ſanction of the Legiſlator, would not be unſucceſsful in fixing a ſtandard of the Engliſh language.

7. All the poetical meaſures in the Greek and Latin languages are included in the four kinds of poetry mentioned by *Horace* in the ſeventh paragraph. The proſodaical laws of theſe two languages are rigid: and as the acquiſition of theſe laws is not without difficulty, the proper application of them to the different kinds of poetry, to which they are reſpectively ſuited, requires judgment, taſte and art. But beſides the metrical conſtructions uſed in Epic, Elegiac, Dramatic and Lyric compoſitions; it is no leſs neceſſary to be well acquainted with the ſpirit and genius of theſe kinds of poetry, before attempting Dramatic compoſition. There are few parts of Tragedy, which do not partake of the Epic or Elegiac; and the various meaſures of the Ode are indiſpenſible in the Chorus.

Lord *Roſcommon* obſerves, that it is difficult to perceive whether the 86th verſe, *Deſcriptas ſervare vices*, &c. belongs to the paſſage that goes before or to that which follows. But it is evident that the Poet, in this

this ſingle verſe, refers both to the different meaſures, and to the four kinds of compoſition which he had juſt mentioned. In this verſe, and the two following, the Poet inſinuates to his two pupils, that unleſs they were well informed in theſe branches, they were to conſider themſelves as unqualified for the arduous taſk of the Drama. We may judge from this, and ſeveral paſſages in the Poem, that this advice, if not rebuke, was wholly neceſſary to theſe young men.

8. The two great branches of the Drama being here perſonified, the Tranſlator hath taken the liberty, in characteriſing them, to amplify, though in a moderate degree. Comedy is a proof, among numberleſs others, of the difficulty of framing unexceptionable definitions. *Ariſtotle* reſtricts it to the loweſt claſs of mankind. The moderns not only condemn this opinion, but think that the actions of the higher ranks of people, and of Kings themſelves, may be introduced into Comedy. Of this number is *Corneille*. The *Scaligers*, Mr *Dacier*, *F. Boſſu* and *Voſſius*, entertained opinions concerning the nature of Comedy ſomewhat different from one another. Without any formal definition, Comedy may be conſidered as a Dramatical compoſition exhibiting in a plain and familiar manner, the various diſpoſitions, paſſions and purſuits of mankind in the common tranſactions of life. The parties are involved in difficulties which terminate happily. Comedy claims, as her province, ridicule and raillery: and

and theſe, artfully conducted and properly levelled, may be of ſingular uſe in correcting the faſhionable vices of citizens.

The Satyre of modern Comedy is, in general, more refined than that of the ancients. The Greek Comedies were abuſive; their authors frequently aſſuming a licence which ought not to be allowed in any well regulated ſtate. This was, to hold up to ridicule the characters of the moſt patriotic magiſtrates, of which *Pericles* and *Nicias* were examples. After *Lyſander* had conquered the Athenians, and changed the conſtitution of the republic, authors found it no longer ſafe to tamper with magiſtracy, though the characters of ſome reſpectable citizens were ſtill abuſed, as is known to have been the fate of *Socrates*. It is true, the Comedy of the *Clouds* of *Ariſtophanes* was compoſed and acted ſeveral years before *Lyſander's* conqueſt of *Athens*. But it appears from the trial, condemnation and death of that philoſopher, that the malevolence of his fellow citizens towards him had increaſed to ſuch a degree, that the ridicule of a Comedy was but a trifling circumſtance when compared with the laſt ſcene of his life. After *Phocion's* time, the ſtate being completely enſlaved, the authors of Comedy became paraſites to the tyrants.

In *Rome*, it was prohibited by a law in the twelve tables to attack the character or reputation of any citi-

zen on the Theatre. *Plautus* and *Cæcilius*, however, are ſaid to have given offence in glancing at the reputation of ſome of their moſt diſtinguiſhed countrymen. *Terence* hath conducted his Comedies with more decency; and had probably an example of a ſimilar conduct in *Menander*. Nothing ſets the theology of the ancients in a more ludicrous point of view, than the introduction of their Deities upon the ſtage, and expoſing their moſt ignominious actions there. Thus were their youth not only authoriſed in, but ſtimulated to immoral practices from the higheſt examples: nor could any thing be more abſurd, than for a people to allow the immoralities of their Gods to be hung out for the amuſement of the mob, while that very people ſecured their own conduct, however open to cenſure, from theatrical ridicule, by a law.

We may, in effect, define Tragedy by remarking wherein it chiefly differs from Comedy. The more elevated ſtyle of the language, the greater ſolemnity of the incidents, the ſuperior rank of the perſons concerned, and the fatal events, are its great characterizing lines. The Tragedies of the ancients were, in general, calculated to excite horror and pity, rather than to touch the more refined paſſions with delicacy. In this circumſtance, many of the modern Tragedies excel thoſe of the ancients: though even this hath not been allowed by thoſe who have undertaken a vindication of the ancient Drama. There is, however, a reaſon for

for this defect of delicacy, to which the advocates for the ancients, and particularly they who have written in conſequence of *M. Perrault's* parallel, have not ſufficiently attended.

The theatrical exhibitions of the ancients, and the ſpectators were in the open air. The Actors had maſks, which covered their whole heads, having faces carved and painted, with apertures for the eyes and mouth. Thus, they could not only not avail themſelves of muſcular expreſſion, and change of features in the countenance; but were obliged to bawl ſo loud as to be heard by the audience, a great and reſpectable part of which ſat at a conſiderable diſtance from the Proſcenium. From this it appears, that many of the moſt delicate and affecting ſcenes in modern Tragedies, and which demand the cloſeſt attention of the audience, would have been wholly loſt on an ancient theatre.

Further, the ſubjects of ancient Tragedies were generally taken from the Trojan war, or from the ages preceding or immediately following that celebrated period. But in thoſe early times delicacy was little known. Victors ſcarcely ever gave quarter to their enemies; even the ladies were enſlaved, and ſometimes treated barbarouſly. Hence Epic and Tragic compoſitions, correſponding with the actions of their heroes, abounded with ſanguinary ſcenes. The Greeks being accuſtomed

accuſtomed to ſee wreſtlings, the *caſtus*, and other ſuch ſhews; and the Romans, the ſtill more cruel entertainments of Gladiators and fights with wild beaſts, would have been diſappointed, if their Tragedies had not exhibited ſcenes of a coarſer and deeper colouring than modern refinement can well tolerate. Perhaps the Romans, being accuſtomed to ſee, and too much pleaſed with the cruelties of the *Arena*, had led *Seneca* to treat them with deaths on the Theatre, for which he hath been cenſured. But though this be commonly the caſe with the general fable of their Tragedies; we, nevertheleſs, find them to abound with a variety of ſentiments no leſs ſuited to move the moſt delicate paſſions than to mend the heart.

Shakeſpeare ſometimes hath recourſe to mean objects for his figures, which, however, he applies artfully, even in the deepeſt parts of his Tragedies. It is, therefore, hoped that the paſſage, *Thoughts low to lofty knows to turn*, will not be held improper in conſtituting a part of the character of Tragedy. Comedy aſſumes a more elevated ſtyle, and ſimilar to that of Tragedy, when the mind is ſtrongly impreſſed or much agitated by any of the paſſions. *Horace* hath given an example of anger in *Chremes*. Love may, in this caſe, have its claim; and a young man, in praiſing his miſtreſs, may, without impropriety even in Comedy, have recourſe to elevated language: *Æſchine may dwell on female charms*, &c.

9. We

9. We ſometimes ſee countenances, in which a regularity of features and a freſhneſs of complexion, may well lay claim to beauty; but which, though diſcovering no blemiſh, are not ſo attracting as others, in which the leſs harmonized parts are balanced by more expreſſion, animation, or ſome natural compenſation, which we are unable to trace, and to which we cannot give a name. Something ſimilar to this obtains in literary compoſitions of all kinds, but in none more than dramatical. Since the beginning of the preſent century, dramatical compoſitions of both kinds have been ſometimes preſented to the public; and though in theſe we cannot complain of the language, of any impropriety in the incidents, tranſgreſſion or defect in the laws of the Drama, nor of the general tendency of the piece; we, nevertheleſs, having read them or ſeen them acted, wiſh not to ſee or read them more. In others, ſtrong and juſt delineations of human nature attract our attention, and meet with applauſe, though irregularly conducted, and perhaps even defective in moral. Were the merits of theſe two joined in one dramatical compoſition, that piece would poſſeſs the *pulchrum* and *dulce* of *Horace*.

The Poet next ſketches the more ſtriking qualifications of a Comedian; and, among others, mentions the features correſponding to the various paſſions. This ſeems not to agree well with what hath been obſerved above relating to maſks; and yet we have no

reaſon

reaſon to doubt that this covering was almoſt conſtantly uſed on the Greek and Roman theatres, from the time of *Æſchylus*. Perhaps there were private rehearſals, in which the maſk was diſpenſed with. The Greeks and Romans were taught the art of moving the paſſions, as a part of education preparatory to their ſpeaking in popular aſſemblies. But from the different parts of this paſſage, it appears that the Author's directions are only meant for theatrical expreſſion. Theatres were provided with a great variety of theſe maſks, expreſſive not only of the paſſions, but of the ranks, ages, and nations of the perſons to be introduced. That a Comedian who was to expreſs different and perhaps oppoſite paſſions, in different ſcenes of the ſame play, had changes of maſks correſponding to theſe paſſions, is probable from ſome paſſages in the Roman Authors.

We have likewiſe reaſon to believe that the maſk was, at times, ſo formed as to expreſs different paſſions on the oppoſite ſides of the face; and that the Actor being careful to ſhew himſelf to the ſpectators only in profile, turned that ſide towards them which beſt ſuited his purpoſe. A paſſage in the *Abbé de Bos'* ingenious work, entitled *Reflexions critiques ſur la Poëſie*, &c. is ſo much to the purpoſe here, that I ſhall ſubjoin it without any apology. Si le Pere des interets duquel il s'agit principalement dans la Comedie doit être quelquefois content et quelquefois fâché, il a un des

ſourcils

ſourcils de ſon maſque froncé, et l'autre rabattu. C'eſt ainſi que *Monſieur Boindin* explique les dernieres lignes du paſſage de *Quintilien*, en ſuppoſant que le Comedien qui portoit ce maſque ſe tournoit tantôt d'un coté tantôt d'un autre, pour montrer toûjours, comme *Quintilien* dit, qu'il étoit ſoigneux de le faire, le coté du viſage qui convenoit à ſa ſituation actuelle dans les ſcenes où il devoit changer d'affection ſans qu'il put aller changer de maſque derriere le théatre. Par exemple, ſi ce Pere entroit content ſur la ſcene, il preſentoit d'abord le coté de ſon maſque dont le ſourcil étoit rabattu ; et lorſqu' il changeoit de ſentiment, il marchoit ſur le théatre, et il faiſoit ſi bien qu'il preſentoit le coté du maſque dont le ſourcil étoit froncé, obſervant dans l'une et dans l'autre ſituation de ſe tourner toûjours de profil. Les Comediens Romains avoient une attention particuliere à cette partie de leur jeu. " Itaque in iis quæ ad ſcenam componuntur fabulis artifices pronuntiandi a perſonis quoque affectus mutuantur, ut ſit Niobe in tragœdia triſtis, atrox Medea ;—patet ille cujus præcipuæ partes ſunt, quia interim concitatus, interim lenis eſt, altero erecto, altero compoſito eſt ſupercilio. Atque id oſtendere maximè latinis lectoribus moris eſt quod cum iis quas agunt partibus congruat." Pollux dans l'ouvrage que nous citons, dit quelque choſe qui me paroit propre à confirmer la conjecture ingenieuſe et ſenſée dont je viens de parler. Cet Auteur en parlant des maſques de caractere, dit que celui du vieillard qui joüe le premier rolle dans la comédie doit

être

être chagrin d'un coté, et ſerain de l'autre. Le même Auteur dit auſſi, en parlant des maſques des tragedies qui doivent être caracteriſez, que celui de Thamyris, ce fameux temeraire que les Muſes rendirent aveugle parce qu'il avoit oſé les defier, devoit avoir un oeil bleu et l'autre noir.

Horace's obſervation, that the mutual aid of nature and of art is neceſſary to make a good Poet, is no leſs applicable to Comedians. It may be doubted whether art alone can ever make a good Actor. The Grecian hiſtory furniſhes a ſtriking example of the power of nature in an Actor on the theatre of Athens. This man being to appear with an urn containing the aſhes of a perſon whoſe death he was to lament; but being diffident of his powers to act a part in which deep ſorrow was neceſſary, without the ſpectators diſcovering it to be forced, brought in an urn, in which were depoſited the aſhes of a favourite child which he had loſt but a few days before. He was not long upon the theatre, when he ſhed abundance of unfeigned tears, and ſoon threw the ſpectators into ſympathetic feelings.

A Comedian, naturally unqualified, and depending on imitation alone, will be in a conſtant ſtate of ſlavery; and if he pleaſe any of the ſpectators, it will only be ſuch of them as are but little acquainted with the theatre, or thoſe who cannot boaſt of a refined taſte. If one be qualified by nature for the theatre, though he

he be not of the higheſt rank, will do well to adhere to his natural action, rather than attempt to adopt the manner of a ſuperior Actor. For his own manner, being thus warped, is in danger of becoming aukward: and though the pattern may give general ſatisfaction, the imitation, being ſoon obſerved, ſeldom fails to diſguſt.

10. To ſupport characters with propriety, as *Horace* here warmly recommends, is one of the moſt important branches in the Drama as well as in the Epopœia. The rank, age, country and occupation of the perſon to be repreſented, merit the ſtricteſt attention both of the Author and Actor. It is of conſequence in the action to ſuit the various parts to Comedians poſſeſſed of correſponding talents. Thus, one of a refined taſte, and qualified for the ſublime, would ill ſubmit to a part exhibiting ludicrous action or an aukward provincial dialect. Such parts as theſe are better fitted for Actors who excel in mimicry or buffoonery.

We may judge of the difficulty of ſupporting characters, by comparing different Authors together. *Homer's* ſuperiority to *Virgil* is more conſpicuous in this than perhaps in any other branch; and the caſe is much the ſame when we compare the Greek Tragedians with *Seneca*, who ſeldom fails to overcharge his characters, and to carry them to extravagance. *Shakeſpeare* hath diſtinguiſhed himſelf in ſupporting charac-

ters. He is perhaps the only Author who could conduct the character of a *Falſtaff* throughout with ſo much propriety.

With reſpect to the differences of characters and of action, it may be obſerved, that the uniform character, what the French call *caractere uni*, requires more delicacy, than characters marked by eccentricities. More art is requiſite in ſupporting the characters of a *Townly* or a *Manly*, than in exhibiting the extravagances of the *Wrongheads*. So in painting, greater art and delicacy are requiſite in delineating a young and beautiful countenance, than one advanced in years, in which ſtronger lines and coarſer features facilitate the labour of the artiſt.

11. In this paragraph are ſome parts, about the ſenſe of which the Commentators do not entirely agree. The verſes containing the controverted paſſages may be paraphraſed thus. "It is difficult to treat with "propriety themes hitherto untouched by others; "and you had better take ſubjects from *Homer*, than "venture upon what are yet unknown and unattempted by any Author. You may make a fable, which "hath been treated by others, your own, by conducting it in your own manner: That is, if you dwell "not upon incidents ſo univerſally known, as to be "in the mouths even of the vulgar; nor too cloſely "adhere to the Author, from whom you take your "fable.

" fable. Laſtly, if you do not lay your plan ſo nar-
" row, that you cannot afterwards decently extend it,
" without tranſgreſſing the laws of the Drama."

The words *communia* and *publica materies*, ſtand in oppoſition to one another; by the former is meant themes open to every body, or ſuch as have not been treated by others; like uninhabited countries, to the lands of which any part of mankind is equally entitled to lay claim. By *publica materies*, *Horace* underſtands the fables of *Homer* or others, from which ſubjects of Tragedies may be taken: but recommends it, in effect, to dramatical Authors, not to have recourſe to the originals for epiſodes, incidents, or language. The expreſſion *verbo verbum reddere*, ought to be interpreted in a ſenſe more extenſive than ſome Commentators have underſtood it; the Author here intending to diſſuade from a cloſe or ſervile imitation, as well as from a literal tranſlation.

Horace next adviſes Poets to avoid pompous introductions. This recommendation may be extended to compoſitions of all kinds: for if an Author ſink, though in a ſmall degree, from a lofty beginning, his reader or hearer will ſoon contract a mean opinion of him. Even in common declamation, one ought to begin with modeſty and reſerve. A degree of diffidence engages the audience in the ſpeaker's favour. I ſhall take the liberty to give an example of the propriety of this obſervation

ſervation from *Homer* in his account of *Ulyſſes* in a public ſpeech; and ſhall ſubjoin the ſentiments of the younger *Pliny* on the ſame ſubject.

> But when *Ulyſſes* roſe, in thought profound,
> His modeſt eyes he fix'd upon the ground,
> As one unſkill'd or dumb, he ſeem'd to ſtand,
> Nor rais'd his head, nor ſtretch'd his ſceptred hand;
> But, when he ſpeaks, what elocution flows!
> Soft as the fleeces of deſcending ſnows
> The copious accents fall, with eaſy art;
> Melting they fall, and ſink into the heart!
> Wond'ring we hear, and fix'd in deep ſurpriſe,
> Our ears refute the cenſure of our eyes.

Pliny's obſervations are as follow: "He varied his "ſtyle," ſays he, "from the lofty to the ſimple, from "the cloſe to the copious, from the grave to the flo- "rid, with equal genius and judgment. Theſe beau- "ties were extremely heightened and recommended "by a moſt harmonious voice; which a very becoming "modeſty rendered ſtill more pleaſing. A degree of "embarraſſment and concern in the countenance of a "ſpeaker throws a grace upon all he utters; for there "is a certain decent timidity which, I know not how, "is infinitely more engaging than the aſſured and ſelf- "ſufficient air of confidence."

12. There

12. There are few excellencies in poetry, none in the Epic kind, examples of which may not be brought from *Homer*; inſomuch that *Ariſtotle's* Art of Poetry is ſaid to have been general rules collected from the Iliad and Odyſſey of *Homer*, rather than the invention of that celebrated Philoſopher. *Horace*, having repreſented the diſadvantages and improprieties of flaſhy introductions, exemplifies from *Homer* the method which Authors ought to follow in entering upon and purſuing the plan of their work: that is, to tell with modeſty the ſubject of the poem, and to paſs inſenſibly from this to ſuch incidents as may captivate the reader's mind, and illuſtrate the ſubject. Among other errors, he animadverts upon one, too common, in proſe, as well as in poetical compoſitions, which is ſomething preparatory and ſuppoſed neceſſary to elucidate the ſubſequent undertaking; or, as Lord *Roſcommon* juſtly expreſſes it, "a beginning to a beginning." The moderns, as the ſame Author obſerves, are more open to cenſure here than the ancients, ſince we have been frequently treated with tedious and laboured introductions, of which the Authors were not entitled to ſuppoſe their readers ignorant. Had theſe Authors undertaken to write the effects of *Achilles'* wrath, they would have, like the Poet at whom *Horace* glances with ridicule, begun with *Leda's* eggs, taken up the rape of *Helen*, and would have journeyed through the nine preceding years of the Trojan war, as an introduction to the operations of two months. *Homer*, with

with more judgment as well as politeneſs, ſuppoſing his reader well informed in this long tale, conſiders it as foreign to his purpoſe.

The verſes of *Horace*, included in this paragraph, are, in the eulogy of *Homer*, a ſlight ſketch of the more ſtriking properties of an Epic poem. To lay the plan of an Epic poem by a proper arrangement of materials; to ſelect or invent epiſodes and incidents with taſte; to regulate and connect theſe with art and propriety; to preſerve throughout that maſterly and ſublime ſtyle of language which is known to be indiſpenſable in ſupporting the dignity of the Epic; to conduct the whole ſo that all the parts may tend to and terminate in one important event, and to render this event ſo intereſting that the reader's elevated expectations may not in the end be diſappointed, may be altogether conſidered as an exertion, which, more than any other, will bring the greateſt powers of the moſt vigorous mind to the ſevereſt proof. Hence, among numberleſs attempts ſince the days of *Homer*, ſo few have ſucceeded.

Having mentioned the murder of *Meleager* in the preceding verſion, though not authoriſed by the text; it may be proper to obſerve here, that *Meleager* was murdered only in a poetical ſenſe. The ſtory, for the ſake of the leſs claſſical reader, is as follows: When he was born, ſay the Poets, the three *Fates* entering the

the room, one of them threw a piece of wood into the fire, declaring that the new born child would live no longer than till that brand ſhould be conſumed; and thereupon ran out of the room. The mother *Althæa*, ſpringing out of bed, ſeized the piece of wood, extinguiſhed it, and locked it up carefully. When *Meleager* came to manhood, the country being laid waſte by the Caledonian Boar, he and the youth of *Greece* convened to deſtroy the monſter. *Atalanta*, being in the cavalcade, was the firſt who wounded him. *Meleager* afterwards killed him; and, having contracted a paſſion for *Atalanta*, he preſented her with the animal's head. His two uncles, *Althæa's* brothers, being offended with this mark of diſtinction, threatened to put her to death; upon which *Meleager* ſlew them and married the Lady. The mother, being provoked with the murder of her brothers, in the heat of her reſentment, threw the fatal piece of wood into the fire. *Meleager* was thereupon ſeized with an ardent fever, and expired when the brand was conſumed. *Diomed*, the nephew of *Meleager*, on his return from the Trojan war, being provoked with the incontinence of his wife *Ægiale*, proceeded to *Italy*, ſettled a colony, and ſhared a kingdom there with *Daunus*.

In this twelth paragraph, we have a more complete ſketch of the nature of an Epic poem, than any where elſe in the Epiſtle. *Horace*, in effect, adviſes to imitate *Homer* in his modeſt but dignified opening; and in his elucidating

elucidating his ſubject as he proceeds. He further ſhews, how far poetic licence may be carried in the marvellous; giving as examples, *Antiphates*, *Sylla*, *Charybdis* and the *Cyclops*. He next diſſuades from an unneceſſary deduction of previous events, holding this to be a miſtaken illuſtration. While he keeps his readers in a conſtant and anxious expectation of the unravelling, to which he ſeems to haſten, he hurries them into various and agreeable incidents, which conſpire to one end. Laſtly, he introduces his machinery, and mixes truth with fiction ſo artfully, that all the parts are properly harmonized, and ſo connected as to conſtitute a juſtly proportioned whole.

13. and 14. *Ariſtotle* hath recommended to Authors of Epic and Dramatical compoſitions to be attentive to the different ſtages of life; but mentions only three, youth, manhood, and old age. *Horace* hath joined childhood to theſe; and, with much elegance, and in few words, hath deſcribed the predominant paſſions of each period. It is true, children ſeldom appear upon a theatre: but Authors of either kind may, with advantage, as their ſubjects lead them to it, deſcribe the blandiſhments and endearments of childhood, or even of infancy. Of this *Homer* hath actually given us an example in *Hector's* laſt interview with *Andromache*: nor hath any Author marked the different periods of life in the paſſions better than this great maſter of poetry. Thus, raſh courage is characteriſtic of *Patroclus*,

clus, who was probably younger than *Achilles*; juvenile ardour, revenge and impetuous paſſions, though not without circumſpection, of *Achilles*; courage, tempered with prudence and ſagacity, of *Ulyſſes*; and of old age, caution and garrulity, in *Neſtor* and *Priam*.

By the coming and retiring years, *anni venientes et recedentes*, in verſes 175, and 176, the ancients underſtood the two great periods of life; the former, thoſe years in which we riſe to our higheſt pitch of vigour: by the retiring years, thoſe in which we decline. It is probably from this, that the French have taken their expreſſion, *il eſt ſur ſon retour*, when one is in the decline of life.

15. It is of importance to thoſe who write for the ſtage, eſpecially the Authors of Tragedy, to diſtinguiſh what ought to be exhibited to the view of the ſpectators, from what ought to be communicated by language alone. Some have thought that *Horace* meant, in the examples of *Atreus* and *Medea*, that deaths ought never to be repreſented on the ſtage. Others are of opinion, that by theſe he underſtood only murders of the more atrocious kind. Without entering into this inquiry, we may conclude, that the Author who is able to command the paſſions of the audience by artful and pathetic deſcriptions, and by the powers of language alone, is better fitted for tragical compoſition, than

one who finds himſelf under the neceſſity of having recourſe to ſanguinary exhibitions. It were better that Tragedy could be conducted without deaths on the ſtage. It is not what is horrid, and ſhocks the mind, but what is refined, and moves our delicate paſſions, that brings the taſte and powers of an Author to the proof. Beſides deaths, whether natural or violent, a grave Author will hardly chuſe to ſhew prodigies, things out of nature, or ſuch puerilities as are meant to deceive the eye.

I am aware, that ſome of theſe obſervations may be conſtructed as glancing at *Shakeſpeare*. But to this there is a ready anſwer. The period in which that Author wrote, and the cuſtoms and creeds of his time, gave a ſanction to many peculiarities which the prudery of the preſent age could not otherwiſe tolerate. We tacitly and inſenſibly ſuppoſe ourſelves tranſported either to the age of the Author, or to that in which the events happened. Beſides, *Shakeſpeare* did not introduce ghoſts, witches, and the like, from a poverty of invention. On the contrary, were his Tragedies ſtripped of that machinery, we have ſtill an extenſive ground-work, and a delineation of nature ſo accurate and rich, as to diſcover a great fecundity of genius. His tracing the compunction which faſtens on the mind from a conſciouſneſs of guilt in Lady *Macbeath's* dream, diſcovers, beſides his knowledge of human nature, more poetical delicacy and art, than all the ſcene-

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ry of witches and ghoſts in that play. Nor was his machinery the moſt exceptionable part of his compoſitions. He was ſometimes miſled by the vitiated taſte and falſe wit of his age, even where the ſcene is not open to a charge of improbability, as in the grave-diggers in *Hamlet*. In theſe he found it neceſſary to give a ſpecimen of his powers in punning, which probably, in thoſe times, would meet with greater applauſe than the more refined parts. As, therefore, the machinery of this Author hath been treated by the moderns with indulgence, we have no reaſon to doubt but *Horace*, notwithſtanding his objections to incredible things, would at leaſt have admitted the preceding apology. Whatever be in this, we may conclude, that *Shakeſpeare's* duſt, like that of *Ennius* with the Romans, will always be found inconſiderable, when compared with his gold.

Horace, in this paragraph, takes notice of other two circumſtances: one is, the length of plays; the other, the number of Actors that ought to appear on the ſtage at one time. Both *Ariſtotle* and *Horace* reſtrict the length of plays to five acts. It is unneceſſary to mention *Ariſtotle's* arguments in favour of this diviſion: their juſtneſs may be called in queſtion. Were plays extended to ſix or ſeven acts, and theſe of their ordinary length, the Poet would be brought under the neceſſity either of protracting his incidents, or of introducing too many: machinery too would be more frequently called

called in, and thus Tragedy would partake too much of the Epic. Again, were the five acts contracted to three or four, and these of the ordinary extent, the incidents would be too much crowded, or would be fewer than would be sufficient for the Author to work up his plot. We may observe further, that plays are of such a length that their action commonly occupies three hours or upwards; in which four rests are found convenient both for the Actors and Audience; more would render the acts too short, or the play too long; and if the piece be of a proper extent, fewer would not give sufficient respite to the Actors. The ancients adhered invariably to five acts; and the moderns have almost constantly followed their example.

The ancients never admitted many Actors on their theatres at once in Tragedy. The number was, for the most part, restricted to two or three: *Horace* seems here to condemn the admission of a fourth. There are two reasons for few Actors appearing at one time in Tragedy, for *Horace* means not Comedy here. One is, that the dignity of Tragedy is better supported by few speakers, than when a larger group conversing together is admitted. Another reason is, that the plays of the ancients being in the open air, the Actors under masks, and a great part of the audience at a considerable distance from the stage, the voices of the particular Actors could not have been sufficiently distinguished from one another, had many been admitted

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in the ſame ſcene. In this reſpect our modern theatres are evidently preferable to thoſe of the ancients; even the whiſper of a delicate female voice may be heard in a box the moſt diſtant from the ſtage.

16. The ancient Drama differed from the modern in nothing more than in being accompanied with a chorus. This is generally known to have been a band who ſung and played on inſtruments, under the direction of one perſon named the *Choriphæus*. The office of the chorus was conſidered as of great importance, and in ſome reſpects ſacred. Their buſineſs was to ſing or play between the acts, ſomething relating to and promoting the plot. The compoſitions for the chorus were always intended to recommend virtue, or to diſſuade from vice: And in ſo far were a balance upon the exhibition of crimes on the theatres of the ancients; which otherwiſe the people might have conſidered as examples for their own practice; eſpecially as their Deities were ſometimes introduced. Some of our modern Critics of taſte, conſidering the office of the chorus, have regreted that it ſhould ever have been exploded from the theatre. Lord *Roſcommon*, in explaining the buſineſs of the chorus, obſerves juſtly, that there was more morality to be learned from the theatres of the ancients than from their temples: And it would appear, that even the people were offended when morality was not properly treated. Thus, *Euripides*

ripides having introduced a miſer defending his own practices and love of gold, in arguments which the people thought too ſtrong; they became turbulent, and would have driven him off the ſtage, had not *Euripides* himſelf appeared, and begged the audience to have patience, aſſuring them they ſhould ſee this miſer completely puniſhed before he let him go. We are further told, that in anſwer to one who reproached him for intending to introduce on the ſtage a character ſo impious as that of *Ixion;* take notice, ſaid he, before I quit him, I ſhall fix him to a wheel. It is to be regreted, that a people, who could ſhew ſuch a regard for virtue, ſhould have been miſled by practices aſcribed to their Deities, and theſe ſometimes repreſented on their theatres. It was, therefore, from the compoſitions ſuited to the chorus, that morality was chiefly to be learned: For the dramatical fables of the ancients had not always a moral tendency.

Beſides the appearance of the chorus between the acts, to entertain the company while the Actors were behind the ſcenes, they were likewiſe preſent, as byſtanders, during the action. The *Choriphæus*, however, ſometimes joined the Actors, and when he began to play or ſing, his chorus immediately followed, taking their direction from him, whether in lamentation or applauſe. The *Choriphæus* ſeems too, beſides his office in conducting the chorus, to have been conſidered as a ſecretary to the Actors, and was of ſingular importance

portance in the whole Drama. The office of the chorus may be learned better from *Sophocles* than from *Euripides*; and theſe two Greek Authors underſtood it much better than *Seneca*, who ſeldom makes a proper application of it. For further obſervations on the chorus, *Sanadon* and *Dacier* may be conſulted; but more particularly Dr *Hurd* on this paſſage of *Horace*.

Some paſſages in ancient hiſtory, of undoubted authority, aſcribe extraordinary uſes to the pipe. Tragedy, or, as the Greek word imports, the ſong of the goat, was originally, and before the days of *Theſpis*, nothing more than a ſong among the ſhepherds in honour of *Bacchus*, with a pipe playing along. The introduction of the dialogue by *Æſchylus* did not exclude the pipe, which ſeems to have been conſidered a neceſſary inſtrument of the theatre, as long as theſe exhibitions laſted among the ancients. We are told by *Cicero*, that they, who were more knowing in this muſic, could readily diſtinguiſh, at the firſt ſound of the *tibia*, whether the Actor pronounced *Antiope* or *Andromache*, which the reſt of the audience were incapable of diſcovering. In another place, he blames the Poets for the careleſsneſs of their numbers, which were ſo extremely like proſe, as only to be diſtinguiſhed from it by the modulation and harmony of the pipe.

17. The eighteen verſes, following the 202, have proved vexatious to the Critics. The verſes 212 and 213

213 ſeem to have little or no connection with the preceding or following paſſages, in ſo much that ſome have ſuſpected them to be none of *Horace's*, or, at leaſt, to be out of their place. The word *licentia*, in the foregoing line, is underſtood by ſome commentators to mean an improvement in number and muſic: By others a more licentious or laſcivious kind of it. But without dwelling longer on minute criticiſm, the ſenſe of the whole paſſage ſeems to be, that, in early times, when the city was thinly peopled, the theatres and audiences ſmall, the manners of the people ſimple and virtuous, the pipe, the only inſtrument then uſed by the chorus, was of a ſmall ſize and unornamented. But that afterwards the city increaſing, a more liberal, perhaps a more laſcivious kind of muſic, and better inſtruments were introduced: But that villagers, peaſants and the meaner part of the plebeians mixing in their audiences with thoſe of taſte and faſhion, were found inconvenient. Further, the number of citizens ſtill increaſing, and the theatres, as we may ſuppoſe, being then attended chiefly by thoſe of more liberal ſentiments, and of a more refined taſte, the decorations, dreſſes, muſic, language, and every thing relating to the Drama, were improved. In the days of *Horace*, the rabble of *Rome*, we may believe, crowded more to the exhibitions of the *Arena*, than to thoſe of the theatre, probably believing the former to be the more manly of the two.

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The learned Commentator, repeatedly mentioned, thinks with juſtice that the two ſuſpected lines would ſtand with more propriety after verſe 224. The whole paſſage is evidently a digreſſion, and hath been treated by the more faſtidious Critics as an unpardonable vagary in the Poet.

Horace next takes notice of the pieces in which the Satyrs appeared. Theſe were the *Exodia* of the Greeks, and the *Atillanæ* of the Romans; and were much akin to the modern Farce, differing, however, from it in a material circumſtance. Our Farce is not ſuppoſed to have any relation to the play acted immediately before: whereas the ſubjects of the *Exodia* and *Atillanæ* were the ſame with thoſe of the preceding plays; and theſe pieces were performed by the ſame Actors, in the ſame dreſſes and maſks. Without attending to theſe particulars, it will be impoſſible for a modern reader to underſtand *Horace's* meaning, when he ſays, that the ſerioufneſs of Tragedy ought to paſs into the jocular piece of the Satyrs with ſuch reſerve, that an Actor, who had ſupported the character of a Deity or of a King in the former, may not dwindle into meanneſs in the latter; and at the ſame time, that ſuch an Actor ought ſo far to relax from his former ſolemnity, and accommodate himſelf to the modes of the Satyrs, as not to talk in a ſtyle too lofty, nor affect greater dignity, than ſuits theſe ſatyrical pieces.

It may be obſerved, however, that ſome Commentators have ſuppoſed the ſatyric pieces of the Romans, and their *Atillanæ*, to have been materially different. The latter are believed to have given way to the other, about the time of, or not long before the Auguſtan age. Dr *Hurd* hath produced ſeveral arguments of weight in ſupport of this opinion; and it is reaſonable to believe that, had they been in uſe in *Horace's* time, he would not have failed to mention them, which he no where does.

The inconvenience, which *Horace* obſerves to ariſe from the vulgar part of an audience being mixed with the more civilized, is an evil, which hath been, and probably will be found to prevail in all ages. The part of an audience, qualified to judge critically and with a delicate taſte both of the compoſition and the action, is commonly ſmall in proportion to the whole: and yet thoſe who take upon them to cenſure and applaud, however little they may be entitled to lay claim to theſe deciſions, make much the greater part. The vulgar are ſeldom pleaſed, unleſs Comedians carry their action beyond nature: but thoſe of better taſte find it more diſguſting to ſee a part overacted, than if it had been below the ſtandard. Thus, Comedians willing to draw the applauſe of their audience, accommodate their action to the greater part, and in ſo far are ſometimes brought under the neceſſity of doing violence to their own judgment and taſte. It will, however,

however, be readily allowed, that Comedians appear at times, ſo highly qualified, and with powers ſo extraordinary, as conſtantly to pleaſe every part of their audience, and that without deſcending to meanneſſes, with which the vulgar are frequently captivated.

18. It was cuſtomary at *Rome* for young women to dance at feſtivals: but when the rites of the great Goddeſs were to be celebrated, Matrons, and particularly thoſe of the more reſpectable kind, were ordered by the prieſts, to diſcharge this function. This duty, being in public, they performed with reluctance, and conducted their movements with ſo much reſerve and decency, as ſtill to preſerve their dignity. *Horace* could not have made a reference more happily than to theſe Matrons, when he meant to ſhew that Tragedy ought at no time to ſink in dignity even in the jocular and ſatyrical pieces ſubjoined. If we conſider what *Horace* ſays upon the whole of theſe Satyrs and their impertinences, there is reaſon to believe that he would have wiſhed them, or whatever on the Roman ſtage correſponded to the Greek *Exodia*, altogether exploded. But as they had been eſtabliſhed, and in ſome meaſure conſecrated by cuſtom and a great length of time, and likewiſe being favourite pieces of the populace, he only attempted ſuch a reformation, as might reduce them to proper order and decency. The Cyclop of *Euripides* is the only remain of this kind that hath eſcaped the injuries of time.

It

It may be here obſerved, that the word *ſaltatio*, having a ſenſe much more extenſive than our term *dancing*, hath been frequently miſunderſtood. By the former is meant, not only the motions which we uſe in dancing, but likewiſe thoſe of the arms, of the body, of the head, or of the eyes in theatrical action, or in declaiming at the bar; nay, of the hands in carving meat.

Carmina cum pleno ſaltari noſtra theatro
Verſibus et plaudi ſcribis amice meis. OV.

Structorem interea, ne qua indignatio deſit,
Saltantem ſpectes, et cheironomonta volanti
Cultello, donec peragat dictata magiſtri
Omnia; nec minimo ſane diſcrimine refert,
Quo geſtu lepores, et quo gallina ſecetur. JUV.

There are many paſſages from *Cicero* and the Roman Hiſtorians, tending to prove this obſervation; but too copious to be inſerted here. The movements, therefore, of Matrons in thoſe rites, might probably have been of a gentler kind than even our ſmooth dances, and perhaps not much different from a decent walk.

The advice of the Poet to conduct the tranſition from Tragedies to the ſubſequent ſatyric pieces with propriety, as the ſhading from one colour to another in painting, merits well the attention of the moderns. We frequently ſee our Tragedies of the higheſt character,

racter, and ſuch as are calculated to act upon the moſt refined paſſions, to correct the manners, to mend the heart, and to improve the taſte, followed by Farces of the moſt inſignificant and puerile kind. It is hardly poſſible to do more to extinguiſh the delicate feelings excited by the preceding exhibition. If Farces be proper at all, they ought only to follow Tragedies of the deepeſt kind, which are productive of horror and awe, but leave the more refined paſſions untouched.

Horace here takes notice of a truth, proofs of which may be found almoſt in every age; which is, that the moſt common things acquire value when treated with judgment and taſte. *Homer* hath recourſe for his figures to the moſt common objects preſented by nature, nor doth he ſink from his dignity even when he deſcribes his heroes occupied in culinary offices, provided we make allowance for the times in which he wrote, and for the ſimplicity of manners which prevailed in the days of his heroes. *Æſop*, by an application of the moſt obvious, and frequently of the meaneſt objects of nature, to the manners of mankind, has ſecured to himſelf a reſpectable name, which hath already paſſed through many ages, and will probably reach the lateſt poſterity. *Virgil's* Paſtorals, excepting two, are compoſed of materials which ſhepherds daily ſee around them: and yet theſe Paſtorals would, of themſelves, and independent of his other works, be ſufficient to prove their Author to have been poſſeſſed of an uncommon

common genius. Among the moderns, *La Fontaine* ſought no further than *Æſop's* Fables; but by telling theſe in his own artful, though ſeemingly artleſs manner, he is held the firſt Fabuliſt of later ages. When theſe or the like works of genius are happily executed, one, in reading them, is apt to imagine he could, without difficulty, have expreſſed himſelf in the ſame manner. But, as *Quintilian* ſays of eloquence, Nothing is harder than what every one imagines he could have done himſelf. M. *Boileau* hath made ſome pertinent obſervations to the ſame purpoſe *.

19. *Horace*, after ſhewing the impropriety of Satyrs talking either in a ſtyle too oratorial and courtly, or in language ſo groſs and indecent as to be inſufferable to an ear of delicacy, proceeds to the meaſures of verſes

* Ce ſont les ouvrages faits à la hâte, &, comme on dit, au courant de la plume, qui ſont ordinairement ſecs, durs, & forcés. Un ouvrage ne doit point paroître trop travaillé; mais il ne ſauroit être trop travaillé, & c'eſt ſouvent le travail même qui en le poliſſant lui donne cette facilité tant vantée qui charme le lecteur. Il y a bien de la difference entre des vers faciles, & des vers facilement faits. Les Ecrits de *Virgile*, quoi qu' extraordinairement travaillés, ſont bien plus naturels que ceux de *Lucain*, qui écrivoit, dit-on, avec une rapidité prodigieuſe. C'eſt ordinairement la peine que s'eſt donnée un Auteur à limer & à perfectionner ſes Ecrits, qui fait que le lecteur n'a point de peine en les liſant. *Voiture*, qui paroît ſi aiſé, travailloit extrêmement ſes ouvrages. On ne voit que des gens qui font aiſément des choſes médiocres; mais des gens qui en faſſent, même difficilement, de fort bonnes, on en trouve très-peu.

verſes the beſt ſuited to dramatical compoſition. This piece of Proſody is comprehended in twelve verſes. But as it would be unintelligible to much the greater part of Engliſh readers, and uncouth even to thoſe who underſtand the Latin Proſody, it is here left unattempted, after the example of Lord *Roſcommon*, *Oldham* and *Francis*. But the obſervations of Lord *Roſcommon* and others on theſe verſes are ſubjoined in a note for the behoof of thoſe who wiſh to read them *.

It

* 252. *Pes citus*] An Iambic is one ſhort and one long ſyllable. To this form it owes its rapidity, and although an Iambic verſe really conſiſts of ſix feet, yet it is called Trimeter; the ſwiftneſs of it making it but three meaſures in ſcanning and pronunciation. *Auſonius* ſays, Iambics are ſwifter than Parthian arrows.

254. *Primus ad extremum*] Pure Iambics without mixture of any other meaſure; as this line, *Suis et ipſa Roma viribus ruit.*

255. *Tardior aut paulo grauiorque*] The Poets mixed Spondees to correct the ſwiftneſs of the Iambics, and to make them more agreeable to the gravity of Tragedy. *Horace* called the Spondees *ſtabiles*, becauſe, as they conſiſt of two long ſyllables, they ſupport themſelves equally. *Dacier.*

257. *Non ut de ſede ſecunda*] The Iambics yield only the odd places to the Spondee, the firſt, third and fifth; but preſerve the ſecond, fourth and ſixth for themſelves. This mixture renders the verſe ſtill more noble, and it may ſtill be called Trimeter, the ſecond foot being Iambic. The comic Poets, better to diſguiſe their verſe, and make it appear more like common converſation, inverted the Tragic order, and put Spondees in even places. *Dacier.*

258. *Socialiter*]

It may be obſerved, however, that *Horace*, in theſe few verſes, hath given a ſtriking proof of his poetical powers: for though the ſubject be of ſuch a nature, that no more could be well expected than merely accurate meaſures, yet hath he expreſſed himſelf with his

258. *Socialiter*] As aſſociates, to whom every thing is in common.

259. *Nobilibus trimetris*] *Horace* blames *Ennius* and *Accius*, for neglecting this mixture of Spondees with Iambics, and for making their verſes hard and heavy by ill placing the Spondees, or by having too many of them. *Nobilibus trimetris* is ſpoken ironically.

260. *In ſcenam miſſus,*] Is the reading of ſeveral manuſcripts. Our Poet ſays, the verſes of *Ennius* and *Accius* were ſo heavy with a weight of Spondees, that they could not walk of themſelves, and were therefore puſhed upon the ſtage. They diſhonoured their Author, and ſhewed, that he was either too haſty and had not given himſelf time to faſhion his poem; or which is yet more ſhameful, that he had offended againſt the rules of an art, which he did not underſtand.

262. *Premit artis crimine turpi*] *Servius* on the fifth book of the *Æneis*, quotes this verſe out of *Horace*,

Nec tanta in metris venia conceditur uli.

"It is not permitted to take ſo much liberty in verſes." If *Servius* is not miſtaken, this verſe may follow immediately after *aut ignoratus*, &c. and we may thence infer, that this piece of the Art of Poetry is not entire, but that ſeveral verſes are loſt. I do not, however, think this verſe is *Horace's*. *Reſcommon.*

In theſe verſes on Proſody are ſome words, about which the Commentators are not agreed. But the paſſage being left out of the preceding verſion, I avoid entering into the controverſy.

his uſual ſpirit and vivacity. The general import of the paſſage is, that Iambics, however proper for the Drama, are too ſwift of themſelves, and require the reſts of ſlower feet, in order to enable the ſpeaker to expreſs himſelf with more dignity, and a better grace: That the ſtability of the Spondee judiciouſly interſperſed, is a proper balance upon the lubricity of the other.

The fate of Poetry with the ancients was, in ſome reſpects, different from that of the preſent times. In *Rome*, poetical compoſitions were read by many who did not underſtand the laws of Proſody. With theſe, poems found indulgence; and, with the more ignorant, applauſe, even though abounding with falſe quantities, and with ſuch errors as would be a ſubject of ridicule to one acquainted with the laws of the language. Hence it is, that *Horace* complains of all kinds of Poets meeting with a good reception at *Rome*, however ignorant they were of propriety in the conſtruction of Latin verſes. With us the caſe is different; for in the Engliſh, and perhaps in all modern languages, quantities, or the value of particular ſyllables in conſtructing verſes, being more arbitrary, or leſs reſtricted to rules than in the Greek and Roman languages, this branch of poetical compoſition becomes an eaſier matter. Accordingly, we meet with many Engliſh, French and Italian poems, in which the meaſures and quantities of the verſes are unexceptionable,

however little merit theſe compoſitions otherwiſe poſſeſs. *Horace*, conſidering the ſtate of Poetry at *Rome*, ironically balances with himſelf, whether it might not be more eligible, like theſe bad Poets, to compoſe rapidly, though without correctneſs, and thus to acquire fame at once, however ſhort lived it might be: or, like ſome other Poets of his own age, ſuppoſing his errors might be detected, write with more caution and accuracy, but ſo dull, or ſeemingly ſo to his readers, as never to become an object of fame.

20. It hath been obſerved, that *Horace*, being the ſon of a freed ſlave, could not with propriety ſay, *Noſtri proavi*, as in verſe 270, and, therefore, in ſpeaking to the *Piſos*, he would ſay, *Veſtri*. In ſome parts of this poem, the Poet ſeems to ſuppoſe anſwers made to his obſervations; and the paſſage before us may be interpreted in this manner.

Hor. Be you careful to peruſe the Greek Authors day and night.

Piſ. And yet our Forefathers applauded both the numbers and the wit of *Plautus*.

Hor. In this, if we do not condemn their folly, we admire their patience, *&c.*

It appears, from different paſſages, that *Horace* meant to convince the Romans, that poetical taſte, in the Auguſtan age, had ariſen to a greater pitch of refinement

ment than they were aware; and that the applauſes they beſtowed upon *Ennius*, and the other Poets of that early period, were unmerited. He, therefore, makes the *Piſos* ludicrouſly oppoſe *Plautus* to the Greek Authors; and, in his turn, takes an opportunity to give them a check for their falſe taſte. By this interpretation, the paſſage *At noſtri proavi*, &c. is not abruptly, but properly introduced, and the word *noſtri* may remain unchanged.

Plautus is known to be an Author of genius and taſte: but allowance muſt be made for the age in which he lived. He is ſaid to have died when *Terence* was nine years of age, that is, in the year of *Rome* 570; conſequently he flouriſhed about 170 years before *Horace*; in which period, taſte made a more rapid progreſs than in any other of the Roman ſtate. *Horace*, therefore, hath been blamed for ſaying, "Our Fore-"fathers tolerated the numbers and wit of *Plautus* "with too much patience, not to ſay folly." Hence ſome in place of *ne dicam*, would make it *non dicam*. It may be obſerved, that the Critics are more divided about the genius and wit of *Plautus* than of any other Author. *Donatus* ſays, his meaſures are uncouth, his wit cold or abuſive. *Cicero*, however, applauds both his latinity and his wit: and *Macrobius*, without regard to the deciſion of *Horace*, ſays his wit was ſo much diſtinguiſhed from that of others, as, after his death,

death, to aſcertain his Comedies, which, without that, might have paſſed for the works of other Authors.

The Romans had three ways of beating time, with the hand, with the foot, or with ſhells, ſomewhat in the manner of our caſtanets. With the two former they beat time to muſic, and ſometimes in reading poetry. The latter was uſed in dancing.

Theſpis ſeems to have taken Tragedy out of the hands of the Shepherds, carrying his Actors about the country in a wain. But all his reformation was to add a ſingle ſpeaker, who might occaſionally, by the declamatory applauſe of ſome hero, give relief to the Chorus. At this time Tragedy was much inferior to a modern Farce. Such as it was, it pleaſed the rabble, who diſliked the improvements of *Æſchylus*. Buffoonery, and the abuſe of public characters, have always been more to the taſte of the populace, than the refined exhibitions of the theatre.

Æſchylus reformed Tragedy ſo much that he, more than *Theſpis*, merited to be denominated its father. He lived in the time of *Miltiades*, *Themiſtocles* and *Ariſtides*, and is ſaid to have been in the battles of *Marathon*, *Salamis* and *Platæa*, when theſe three Generals commanded ſeparately. He firſt gained the prize of Tragedy, in the third year of the ſeventy-third Olympiad. *Æſchylus*, when old, finding the Tragedies

dies of *Sophocles* preferred to his own, retired to *Sicily*, where he died.

21. The reformation made on Tragedy by *Æſchylus*, was probably the cauſe of Comedy becoming a diſtinct branch of the Drama. The licentious introduction of private characters, and even of thoſe of the magiſtrates, upon the ſtage, and the looſe manners of the Satyrs were gratifying to the populace. But theſe being laid under reſtrictions, and the times in which the Chorus was allowed to act being circumſcribed, the people, we may believe, would be diſſatisfied and diſpoſed to complain; and therefore would inſiſt on having thoſe parts that were moſt agreeable to themſelves acted ſeparately from the compoſitions of *Æſchylus*. That Comedy took its riſe in this manner, is the more probable, that it was acted even in the time of *Æſchylus*.

Thus the Old Comedy had its origin, and, having ſhaken itſelf looſe of the fetters to which *Æſchylus* had ſubjected it, exceeded all bounds of decency. At length, in the firſt year of the eighty-fifth Olympiad, while *Pericles* had the adminiſtration of the republic, the acting of Comedy was prohibited in Athens. But this prohibition continued only three years. Comedy, from this period, proceeded without controul till the Athenians had the misfortune to fall under the yoke of *Sparta*. That people then having governors ſet over them by their enemies, Comedians found it neceſſary

neceſſary to conduct themſelves with more reſerve, eſpecially with reſpect to the characters of magiſtrates. It hath been denominated the Middle Comedy from this period till *Phocion's* time or ſomewhat later; and having inſenſibly relaxed in its moderation, it began again, like the Old Comedy, to recommend itſelf to the populace by indecent impertinences and unbecoming freedoms with the characters of citizens. At length *Alexander* laid it under freſh reſtrictions, when it aſſumed the name of the New Comedy.

With reſpect to the ſtate of Comedy at *Rome*, its different kinds, and its relation to that of the Greeks, in all which there are conſiderable uncertainties, it may be obſerved, that by the *Prætextæ* we are to underſtand Tragedies, containing only Roman characters; by the *Togatæ*, Comedies, which again were divided into different kinds. Dr *Hurd* hath made a variety of curious obſervations on this, as on many other paſſages of this epiſtle.

One of the moſt important differences between ancient and modern Comedy is, the admiſſion of female characters even of high ranks on our theatres. In the Roman Comedy, we ſeldom hear of a female beyond a nurſe, a bawd, a midwife, or a wench, of whom ſome young man is enamoured. Were modern theatres reduced to ſuch meanneſſes, they would ſoon be deſerted. Another circumſtance in the ancient Comedy is,

that

that the Dramatiſts ſeldom ſought characters above the middle rank of life; the modern range from the higheſt to the loweſt. Inſtead of the penury of female characters on the ſtages of the former, which muſt have been productive of a barrenneſs in their repreſentations, our theatres acquire, from the varied exhibition of this character, in Tragedy a ſolemn and frequently affecting dignity, in Comedy a ſprightlineſs and feſtivity, in both an enlivening and captivating luſtre. It may be further obſerved, that, when our more accompliſhed Actreſſes do juſtice to approved dramatical compoſitions, they may be conſidered as ſtandards to many of their female ſpectators, for elegance of language, for dignity and grace of attitudes and movements, and, in general, for politeneſs of manners. No advantages of this kind could be acquired from the female characters of the ancient Comic Drama.

Horace animadverts on the Poets of his time for careleſſneſs in correcting and poliſhing their works; and obſerves, that were it not for this, the Roman ſtate would have been no leſs diſtinguiſhed for Authors of taſte, than for her ſucceſs in arms. The Romans gave little or no attention to literature and the fine arts, till the ſtate was become rich, and luxury had corrupted the greater part of the citizens. Whoever were poſſeſſed of wealth, were wholly intent on raiſing themſelves to power, whether in civil or military offices. Being ardent in theſe purſuits, it cannot be

ſuppoſed

ſuppoſed that they could bear interruption, or ſubmit to the labour of compoſing and poliſhing verſes. Luxury of itſelf, independent of occupations or ambitious motives, muſt ever prove an obſtacle to painful and tedious compoſitions. The two great Poets of the Auguſtan age had probably been inured to labours from their childhood, the one being the ſon of a freed ſlave, the other a peaſant. *Ovid*, who completes this poetical group, being of higher rank and of a richer family, had probably been educated in luxury. But, in a great part of his works, we can diſcover marks of remiſſneſs, and in no part of them that accurate and ſevere limation ſo conſpicuous in the compoſitions of the other two.

It may be obſerved, that verſification in Latin, with reſpect to the labour attending it, may be conſidered as differing more from compoſitions in proſe than in any other language: and this difference was perhaps greater in ancient *Rome* than in any other country. It hath been already remarked, that the accurate laws, to which the quantities of this language are ſubjected, the lengthening and ſhortening of ſyllables being leſs arbitrary in it than at leaſt in any modern language, contribute much to the difficulty of conſtructing Latin verſes. But to poliſh theſe, after they have been conſtructed, to a high degree of refinement, is a taſk to which very few have been found equal.

The

The Proſody of the Greek language, it is true, is ſimilar to that of the Latin: but the Greek is known to be in general more ductile than the other: beſides, its different dialects were of ſingular uſe in facilitating its verſification. Accordingly, we find *Homer* availing himſelf of the four dialects, as they ſerved his purpoſe. We may next obſerve, that there was no branch of ſtudy, to which the Roman youth applied themſelves more ſeriouſly than to that of Rhetoric. For this, there was a ſubſtantial reaſon, ſince Oratory was the line in which they could riſe in the ſtate with more advantage than in any other. Hence they acquired a facility of ſpeaking and writing in proſe, while the labour of verſification was wholly oppoſite to their ambitious purſuits. This accounts for the great quantity of elegant compoſitions in proſe among the Romans, while ſo few excelled in poetry.

22. The opinion of the ancients, that the inſpiration of *Apollo* was neceſſary to make good Poets, and this being ſuppoſed productive of a kind of phrenzy, led *Democritus* to declare, that every perſon of a ſound mind was excluded from *Helicon*. *Horace*, from this idea, takes occaſion to ridicule ſome of the Poets of his time, who wiſhed to be thought labouring under this enthuſiaſtic inſanity. He, at the ſame time, ironically laments his own folly, in having recourſe to vernal cathartics for the preſervation of health; without which, he thinks he might have had his ſhare of

this divine fury as well as others. The figure of the whetſtone is taken from *Iſocrates*, who, being aſked, Why he taught the laws of Rhetoric, he himſelf being no Rhetorician? anſwered, Whetſtone ſharpens ſteel, though it cannot itſelf cut.

23. The Poet, having introduced a piece of raillery upon the authority of one Philoſopher, proceeds here with the ſupport of another, to declare his own real ſentiments to be, that all good writing is founded in good ſenſe, or, in other words, in truth. It is much to the honour of *Socrates*, that *Horace*, though an Epicurean, as is believed, ſhould refer to him to aſcertain the moſt important of all truths, that is, moral. It ſeems indeed not to have been uncommon with the ancients, when one meant to be underſtood as telling an abſolute truth, to have ſuppoſed it as true as if *Socrates* had ſaid it.

——— *Barbatum hæc crede Magiſtrum*
Dicere, ſorbitio tollit quem dira cicutæ *.

This was due to *Socrates*, ſince he may be conſidered as the firſt moral Philoſopher among the Greeks. He had obſerved the defects of the philoſophy which was faſhionable in his time. The ſucceſſors of *Pythagoras* in the Italic ſchool, and thoſe of *Thales* in the Ionic, forgetting the pure doctrines of theſe maſters, had degenerated

* PERS. Sat. iv.

generated into a philoſophy conſiſting of unſatisfactory ſubtilties, and, for the moſt part, of unintelligible metaphyſical diſputations. They dwelt upon inquiries into the qualities of matter, not by experimental inveſtigations, but by hypothetical reaſonings, productive of much abſurd theory. *Socrates* ſeeing morals, however intereſting to mankind, wholly neglected, reared a ſyſtem of philoſophy on a new bottom. He made no further uſe of the natural world, than to deduce from it the exiſtence of one univerſal intelligent cauſe. He conſidered this as a rational concluſion, from obſerving, among other things, the ſtructure of animal bodies, in which all parts conſpire to one end, each being ſubſervient to the reſt. He eſtimated this life as preparatory to another, and believing the felicity of the mind to conſiſt in virtue, he devoted his whole attention to morals.

Having, in the preceding verſion, ſubſtituted Academic School for *Horace's Charta Socratica*, it may be proper to obſerve, that, in the time of *Socrates*, there was no ſchool under the denomination of Academy known at *Athens*; but ſtill the Academies are conſidered as having originated from this Philoſopher; for the old Academy was founded either by his ſcholar *Plato* or *Speuſippus*, it is uncertain which.

Socrates never having committed to writing any of his philoſophical principles, we are to underſtand by the

the *Chartæ Socraticæ*, either the works of *Plato*, or of ſome other Philoſophers probably of the old Academy: for the innovations of *Arceſilaus* into the middle, and of *Carneades* into the new Academy, tended more to ſcepticiſm than the doctrines of *Socrates* or of *Plato*. *Horace* might well recommend the ſearch after truth, from the principles of theſe two Philoſophers; for the works of *Plato* had been known, and much ſtudied in *Rome*, long before the Auguſtan age. But the writings of *Ariſtotle* were not brought to *Rome*, till after the firſt *Mithridatic* war, when *Sylla* carried them from *Athens*, and lodged them in his own library, only twenty-two years before *Horace* was born.

A language ſo complete, as to furniſh words correſponding to all our ideas, is not to be found. The obſcurity and ambiguity, ariſing from the neceſſity of conveying different ideas under the ſame term, are obvious. When *Horace* ſays, *Quo ſit amore parens*, &c. we are not to underſtand, with what degree of love, but with what kind of love or affection. To give an example of the preceding remark in this word, it may be obſerved, that, when we ſpeak of the love of man to the Deity, we can mean nothing more by it, than that the human mind, from an admiration of the perfections and nature of the ſupreme Being, however incomprehenſible, is impreſſed with a deſire to aſſimilate itſelf to the abſolute rectitude of that Being, as far as humanity can admit of ſuch an aſſimilation. The

love

love of parents to children is an inſtinctive paſſion, not depending upon any thing reciprocal in infants, eſpecially when new born; this, therefore, is obſerved to obtain in all the animal world. The love of children to parents is accidental, and is ſtronger or weaker, as the allurements of the latter are more or leſs attractive. The love of two or more friends, ſuppoſe of the ſame ſex, whether ariſing from a congruity of minds, or from a conſciouſneſs of mutual benevolence, is different from the love of the ſexes, and both of theſe from all the reſt. There are many words, in every language, which might undergo the like examination. Hence, it appears, how difficult it is to frame generic and ſpecific definitions of terms unexceptionably. Theſe diſtinctions, however, ought to be conſidered as indiſpenſible with thoſe, who undertake delineations of common life, or who ſcrutinize human nature, the great objects of the Epic and the Drama.

Truth in poetry, as in painting, is of two kinds. The firſt, as it ſtands in oppoſition to fiction, as when *Horace* ſays of *Homer*, "*Atque ita mentitur, ſic* veris "*falſa remiſcet.*" and in another place, "Ficta, vo-"*luptatis cauſa, ſint proxima* veris." The other is, Truth in manners and characters. When this is accurately preſerved by an Author of Comedy, it will go far to recommend his compoſition, though otherwiſe artleſs and wanting grace, or elegance of language. Whereas we frequently ſee compoſitions unſucceſsful, though

though regularly wrought, and ſet off with pompous language; but defective in tracing nature. This paſſage in *Horace* is generally ſuppoſed to relate to Comedy alone. Dr *Hurd* extends it to the Drama in general. But truth of this kind is found to obtain in the other arts. The ſimple and coarſe delineations of an *Albert Durer*, conveying much natural expreſſion, attract the attention more than many pieces whoſe laboured finiſhing contains leſs of nature: and, while we admire the *antique* and ſublime of the Italian ſchools, the merit of the Flemiſh, in exhibiting the coarſe and ruſtic manners of the vulgar, ought not to eſcape us. The characters and manners, ſo ſtrongly marked in *Commines'* hiſtory, though artleſsly drawn, and frequently in a homely ſtyle, are more approved by readers of taſte, than hiſtories, whoſe chief excellencies lie in a brilliancy of language and high wrought periods.

But though abſolute truth ſtands in oppoſition to fiction of every denomination, there is ſtill, in poetry, a kind of truth not inconſiſtent with fiction itſelf. Had *Homer* introduced *Alecto*, or any of her ſiſter Furies, to diſſuade *Achilles* from drawing his ſword upon *Agamemnon*, this would have been a violation of poetical truth. But the Goddeſs of wiſdom is with propriety employed in this office. This poetical truth, therefore, though it hath a relation to that of characters and manners, is reſolvable into the proper application

of

of machinery, in which the characters are fictitious or imaginary.

24. The Poet, to give us an idea of the education not uncommon in *Rome* at that time, ſuppoſes arithmetical queſtions to be put to the ſon of a rich uſurer, who, by his anſwers, diſcovers the nature of his education. Come tell me, young man, ſays he, Take one from a quincunx, what remains? A third, replies the youth. But add one to it, ſays *Horace*.—One half, replies he. This will be hardly intelligible to the greater part of Engliſh readers, who are unacquainted with the Roman pound, and its conſtituent parts: for which reaſon the liberty of a periphraſis in the verſion is uſed; in which, though the pupil's anſwers be not ſo ready, their meaning is rendered more obvious.

For the further illuſtration of this paſſage of *Horace*, it may be obſerved, that the ſons of the great families of *Rome*, when in a diſſolute courſe of life, and their fathers in appearance near their end, uſed to borrow from uſurers ſums of money at exorbitant intereſt, in ſo much as in three or four years to double the capital, to be paid at their fathers death. Hence the liberty is taken in the verſion, to call a third, the uſurer's annual ſhare. The legal intereſt of money in the Auguſtan age, and a conſiderable time before that period,

riod, was very high in *Rome*, in proportion to the intereſt of the preſent times.

The Romans uſed a preparation from cedar wood, called *cedrium*, as a varniſh to preſerve their manuſcripts, and the wooden rollers to which they were fixed, from worms. Cheſts made of cypreſs wood were likewiſe found uſeful for the ſame purpoſe.

With reſpect to education, which is the ſubject of this 24th paragraph, it may be obſerved, that it is conducted according to the genius of people of particular ſtates, joined with ſome accidental circumſtances. In *Tyre* and *Carthage*, ſtates celebrated for trade and the art of navigation, we may believe theſe two branches would be the chief object of education. In *Rome*, the ſtudy of arms, of rhetoric, and of oratory, claimed the principal attention of the youth: this was the caſe before a high degree of corruption, and the evils of which *Horace* complains, had obtained in the ſtate. In *Sparta*, the arts, excepting arms and agriculture, being conſidered as uſeleſs, if not dangerous, were baniſhed by law. *Athens* was celebrated for all the branches of philoſophy and of polite literature. For the acquiſition of theſe, ſtrangers reſorted to that city. The art of war both by ſea and land was likewiſe cultivated by the citizens. When *Horace* ſets the Greek education in oppoſition to that of the Romans in his own

own time, he hath *Athens* in his eye, where he was himself educated.

25. The Author, having complained of the defect of a true taste among the Romans from improprieties in conducting the education of their youth, proceeds to point out a few of the lines by which Authors may acquire fame, and their librarians riches. His first direction, and what he repeats oftener than any other as of the greatest importance, is to please and to instruct. The 337th verse, *Omne supervacuum*, &c. is by some Commentators, particularly *Bentley* and *Sanadon*, rejected as an interpolation. The general sense of the passage, however, is obvious enough, signifying the advantages arising from conveying instruction in few words, that it may be the more easily retained; and that the docile mind, perceiving the import of the precepts taught, will be disposed to reject every superfluous addition.

It would appear that some impertinences of the marvellous kind had been exhibited on the Roman theatres in *Horace's* time; as children devoured by monstrous women, and again shewn on the stage alive and unhurt. The Poet, therefore, takes this opportunity to recommend an important maxim to Authors; that is, not to avail themselves of the marvellous without reserve; the licentious use of which being more dangerous, than to abstain from it altogether. This

ought hardly ever to be admitted in Tragedy; in Epic with greater freedom, but ſtill within the degrees of probability. In Comedy, though incidents which ſurpriſe are frequently and properly introduced, they ought never to be ſuch as come under the denomination of the marvellous.

In modern Comedy we have no reaſon to complain of impertinent deceptions, ſuch as theſe mentioned by *Horace*. It is indeed to be regreted, that theatres which ought to be devoted wholly to the two great branches of the Drama, ſhould ever have been proſtituted to the tricks of an harlequin, a ſcaramouch, or to pantomimes. Theſe ought to have their reſpective theatres, to which people might repair, as they ſhould be led by their taſte.

People advanced in years, ſays *Horace*, are pleaſed with exhibitions of the grave and monitorial kind; while youth, diſliking auſterities, prefer that ſort of raillery which provokes mirth and laughter. An Author, who purſues a plain and ſimple fable, will find it difficult to pleaſe both. Here a queſtion of ſome importance may be ſtarted. That is, How far may contraſts be admitted in the Drama, particularly in Comedy, without a violation of the unities? Contraſting hath been found, not only uſeful, but neceſſary, in painting: and ſuch is the relation of this art with poetry, that the eſſential circumſtances which obtain in the

one, are, for the moſt part, found, in a higher or lower degree, proper, if not neceſſary, in the other. An oppoſition of characters is almoſt indiſpenſable both in Tragedy and Comedy, inſomuch that a fable will be found inſipid without it. If, therefore, in Comedy, a double plot can be ſo conducted, or the one be ſo interwoven with the other, that the unities ſhall in no reſpect be violated, the requiſites of *Horace*, to pleaſe both the old and the young, will be obtained. In the Engliſh Drama, there is perhaps no better example of what is here meant, than the Comedy of the *Provoked Huſband*. In that compoſition, the diſtreſſes of the one family approaching the dignified gravity of Tragedy, are happily contraſted with the ludicrous impertinences of the other: nor are the laws of the Drama ſo far violated as to offend the moſt faſtidious Critic.

26. The import of this paragraph is liberal criticiſm. Of the different departments in the republic of letters, few, if any, have been more frequently and more variouſly treated, than that of criticiſm. This taſk is more or leſs arduous, according to the nature of the ſubject, and the circumſtances attending it. Though a Critic be poſſeſſed of profound erudition, accurate and extenſive obſervation, a refined taſte, ſtrength of genius, with a ſound and penetrating judgment, he will ſtill be unequal to the undertaking, unleſs a liberality of mind correſponding to the other high qualities be added.

Manners

Manners and criticiſm, in ſome reſpects, keep pace together. Since the former hath been more highly poliſhed, the other hath been conducted with greater liberality. Critics of the two laſt centuries generally treated their Authors with unbecoming acrimony. Even Madam *Dacier*, notwithſtanding her ſex and literary merit, did not eſcape the indecent ſeverities of criticiſm. A Critic, well qualified, and actuated by a liberality of mind, who is at leaſt as deſirous to point out beauties as to diſcover blemiſhes, lays his Author under much obligation, and merits well his thanks. But one who, affecting a didactic and magiſterial air, and proceeding with a cynical aſperity, is pleaſed with nothing but minute, and, what may be termed, malevolent criticiſm, who dwells upon trifling faults, and triumphs over his Author as having diſcovered him to be void of merit, is his own executioner. A volume of real merit may ſet illiberal and acrimonious criticiſm at defiance; and is, as *Boileau* hath well obſerved, like a piece of wood in water, which, though kept at the bottom for a while, will riſe of itſelf, when the depreſſing power is removed. Of all kinds of compoſition, criticiſm is the moſt dangerous; for if an Author of this kind trip in any circumſtance, he may lay his account with having his error returned upon him, like an arrow, with redoubled violence; nor hath he reaſon to complain, ſince he hath ſpontaneouſly conſtituted himſelf a public Cenſor.

What

What relates to criticiſm in this paſſage of the epiſtle, is ſhort, plain, and ſignificant: the Author, in effect, adviſing to criticiſe with a liberal mind; and tells us, that the general merit of any compoſition ought to have its due applauſe, notwithſtanding ſome blemiſhes which may ariſe from the inadvertency of the Author, or from the common failings of human nature. In confirmation of this remark, it may be obſerved, that of two compoſitions, though many blemiſhes be found in the one, and none in the other, the former may, nevertheleſs, be preferable to the other. The authority of *Longinus* is of uſe here. That Critic tells us, that he had found many faults in *Homer*, and theſe not of a trifling nature; but that the Argonautics of *Apollonius* are without a fault from the beginning to the end; and yet the ſuperiority of the Iliad over the other is ſo great as not to admit a compariſon. *Cherilus* a bad Poet, who lived in the time of *Thucydides*, is cenſured by *Ariſtotle*.

27. In verſe 366th, *Horace* addreſſes himſelf to the elder of the two ſons, which ſeems to merit the attention of a Tranſlator the more that this addreſs, if I miſtake not, is continued to the ſame *Piſo* to verſe 408th, if not to the end of the poem. The laſt part of it, *Ne forte pudori*, &c. renders it probable that this youth had attempted Lyric poetry, which being of all kinds of compoſition the moſt difficult, the Poet's cautions and admonitions to him are remarkably ſtrong.

The

The reference to painting, which makes the opening of this 27th paragraph, hath not always been interpreted preciſely in the ſame manner. The three ſiſter Arts, Poetry, Painting and Muſic, have been conſidered as having a more intimate relation to one another than to any of the reſt: hence we frequently find one of them aptly introduced for the illuſtration of another. The incidents and epiſodes of an Epic poem correſpond to the more ſtriking figures in a piece of painting, which the Artiſt draws in a ſtronger light, and diſengages from the canvas, the more readily to catch the eye of the beholder. The connecting parts of the former, and the filling up of the back and fore grounds of the latter, are what attract our attention leſs; ſo that we are perhaps ſatisfied with a ſingle reading of the one, and a ſuperficial view of the other. Both of theſe thus diverſified, pleaſe more than if all the parts had been equally ſtriking. This ſeems to be a more natural interpretation of *Horace's* meaning, than if we were to ſuppoſe one complete compoſition ſo lifeleſs as never to wiſh to read it oftener than once: ſince ſuch a piece would hardly reach mediocrity, and conſequently, by *Horace's* own law, would have no claim to poetry at all. The ſame obſervation may be applied to oratory, eſpecially when, by the uſe of alluſions, figures and metaphors, it acquires a nearer relation to poetry and painting. Accordingly, *Cicero* obſerves, *habeat illa in dicendo admiratio ac ſumma laus umbram*

umbram aliquam et receſſum, quo magis id, quod erit illuminatum, extare atque eminere videatur.

The two Orators mentioned here were men of diſtinguiſhed worth. *Meſſala Corvinus*, beſides other good qualities, was an encourager of men of literature and genius. He was the patron and intimate friend of the Poet *Tibullus*. *Caſſellius Aulus* rendered himſelf famous by nothing more than his obſtinate refuſal to draw up the infamous edict of proſcription of the ſecond Triumvirate. By this proof of his intrepid and independent ſpirit, in an age of ſlavery, he expoſed his life to the greateſt danger. Mr *Dacier* hath obſerved, that it was much to the honour of *Auguſtus* that a Poet of his court durſt make honourable mention of *Caſſellius*; and other Commentators have expreſſed themſelves to the ſame purpoſe. But this obſervation amounts to no more than that it was much to the honour of *Auguſtus* that he was not an implacable Tyrant. Beſides, there are ſome circumſtances which render it probable, that, about the time in which *Horace* wrote his Art of Poetry, *Auguſtus* was reconciled to *Caſſellius*.

M. Anthony was always conſidered as having the ſole direction of the proceedings of that Triumvirate; *Lepidus*, partly from a family connection, and partly from his natural weakneſs, being wholly under *Anthony's* management; and *Auguſtus*, then *Octavianus*, having hardly

hardly reached the age of manhood. Soon after this, *Anthony*, as is well known, became the inveterate enemy of *Auguſtus*, and diſputed the empire with him. It is further probable, from ſome paſſages of the Roman hiſtorians, that *Auguſtus* afterwards repented his having had a ſhare in that proſcription, or, at leaſt, his having made a ſacrifice of *Cicero*. From all which, there is reaſon to believe, that *Auguſtus* would not be greatly diſpoſed to reſent the conduct of *Caſſellius* in oppoſing the Triumvirate. Further, *Horace's* introducing him as a celebrated Orator, was no more than what every Roman citizen knew.

It was greater boldneſs in *Horace*, not only to rank *Cato* among the moſt celebrated patriots of *Rome*, but to applaud his death *, which it was impoſſible to do, without an oblique condemnation of *J. Cæſar's* conduct. *Auguſtus*, we are told, encouraged this kind of freedom, that the Romans might be the leſs ſenſible of their new ſtate of ſlavery. *Cremutius Cordus*, in a recital of ſome part of his works to *Auguſtus*, is ſaid to have had the courage to call *Brutus* and *Caſſius* the laſt of the Romans. Having inſenſibly gotten ſo far in a digreſſion, we may ſtill proceed, and obſerve, that *Virgil* ſeems to have availed himſelf but little, if at all, of the Emperor's indulgence, though he had the faireſt opportunity in the ſixth Æneid, where the Roman heroes paſs in review before *Æneas*. In the paſſage of

* Lib. I. Od. 12.

of the eighth book, *his dantem jura Catonem*, the Commentators univerſally underſtand the younger *Cato*: and yet it may be aſked, Why not the other? The character of the Cenſor was in high veneration among the Romans, and no name better known in their hiſtories; while that of the other was not yet ſo well eſtabliſhed, his friends and his enemies being ſtill alive. When, therefore, at that time, a *Cato* was mentioned by the Hiſtorians or Poets, without any diſtinguiſhing mark, we have reaſon to believe the Cenſor would be underſtood; nor is it improbable, that *Virgil*, from his natural timidity, might ſcreen himſelf under the ambiguity of the name; while perhaps he was not diſſatisfied to be underſtood to mean the younger *Cato*. In the paſſage, *Jacet ingens littore truncus*, he is thought to lament the death of *Pompey*: and in another paſſage, *vendidit hic patriam auro*, he is believed to glance at *Curio*, who, upon *Cæſar's* paying his enormous debts, deſerted his party, and joined that of *Cæſar*. But this ſtricture might, with equal juſtice, have been applied to many others at that time.

28. It is an eaſy matter to rate the extent of our bodily ſtrength with ſo great preciſion, as to regulate our efforts by a proper ſtandard, proofs of which daily obſervation affords. But to make a juſt eſtimate of the powers of the mind, is attended with ſo great difficulties, that others are frequently well acquainted with our mental defects and weakneſſes, while we our-

ſelves remain in ſo great ignorance of theſe, that a friendly advice concerning them is either received with impatience, or conſidered as proceeding from an envious principle perhaps in our beſt friend. This ſeems to have been the caſe with many of the Poets of *Rome* in *Horace's* time. Were Authors, whoſe works have been long forgotten, to riſe from the dead, they would aſcribe this neglect rather to the ſupine inattention of mankind, than to want of merit in their volumes. So hard is it, and almoſt impoſſible, to apply to ourſelves the ancient and important precept, *Know thyſelf.*

Piſo, the elder ſon, to whom *Horace* continues his addreſs, being the repreſentative of an ancient and noble family, had probably entertained an opinion, that his high rank would go far in adding weight to his compoſitions. *Horace*, therefore, artfully holds up to ridicule ſome Roman Knights who, it would appear, had abſurdly boaſted, that their rank, riches and reputation entitled them to undertake poetical compoſitions. This oblique caution, by ridicule, could hardly fail of a better effect than a direct and grave admonition.

The opinion, that a literary compoſition finds a better reception from the public, when coming from an Author of high rank, than from one in obſcurity and unknown, is not altogether without foundation. The

reaſon

reaſon of this ſeems to be, that the character of one in an eminent ſtation is generally known; and we wiſh to be ſatisfied whether the compoſition heightens his character, or detracts from it. It is for a ſimilar reaſon, that, intereſting ourſelves in the ſucceſs of thoſe within the ſphere of our acquaintance, we read their works with ſtill greater ſolicitude. But we can have no other motive to read the works of an Author wholly unknown to us, than the pleaſure or improvement we reap from their contents.

The name or rank alone of an Author, however, will not go far in recommending a book to the public; and their effects will be ſtill leſs in ſupporting it there for any conſiderable length of time. For ſucceſs, a volume muſt depend upon its own internal worth, without which it will ſoon, like thouſands of others, be conſigned to endleſs oblivion. The Fables of *Phædrus* are in no leſs eſteem with us at preſent, than if they had come from his maſter, though the greateſt Monarch in the world: nor would the name of *Mæcenas*, though deſcended from Etruſcan Kings, have raiſed the value of the works of *Horace*, whoſe forefathers were ſlaves.

The Poet, purſuing his purpoſe, recommends it to his friend to ſubmit his writings to the examination of thoſe whom judgment and taſte enabled, and whoſe friendſhip would determine them to point out

out the blemiſhes. *Metius*, introduced here, is the ſame with *Tarpa*, mentioned in the tenth Satyre of the firſt Book, and was one of thoſe judges who had been appointed by *Auguſtus* to examine and decide of works of literature, and particularly of poetical compoſitions. *Horace* further adviſeth *Piſo* to keep his works nine years under correction, a definite for an indefinite number. Why he ſhould prefer the number nine to ten, or to any of the inferior numbers, whoſe proſodaical quantities equally ſuited his purpoſe, is not eaſy to conjecture. The ancients were ſuperſtitiouſly attached to ſome odd numbers, as three, ſeven, nine. Of odd numbers, therefore, nine being the higheſt that ſuited the Poet's verſe, and perhaps being conſidered as particularly auſpicious, was preferred.

29. After ſo much home advice, *Horace*, apprehending that *Piſo* might believe he meant to diſſuade him from poetry altogether, exhorts him not to be aſhamed of it, but to perſiſt in his application to that art, as one of the nobleſt in which the human mind can exerciſe itſelf. He obſerves further, in the examples of *Orpheus* and *Amphion*, that to this the civilization of nations had, in a great meaſure, been owing. In the earlier periods of the world, the art of poetry was held the effect of Divine inſpiration. Philoſophers and Legiſlators, availing themſelves of this opinion, conveyed their doctrines and laws under a poetical form. Thus they found a more favourable reception, than if they had

had been conceived in common language. If to theſe obſervations we add the hyperbolical language, the allegories and ſtriking figures then in uſe, and theſe conveyed in poetical dialogues, we ſhall be reconciled to the manner of the moſt ancient compoſitions.

Beſides the civilization of mankind, *Horace* finds poetry uſeful in procuring the favour of Kings. This is a ſubject on which the Poet could hardly fail to ſpeak feelingly, ſince there is perhaps no example of Poets to whom the obſervation is more applicable than to *Horace* and *Virgil*. We have the beſt reaſon to believe that the works of theſe two Poets were of ſingular uſe in humanizing the mind of *Auguſtus*. That Monarch is believed to have been of a cruel, vindictive, and ungenerous diſpoſition: there were many actions in the earlier part of his life which tend to prove the truth of this obſervation. For his political conduct and character in the empire, he was indebted to *Agrippa* and *Mæcenas*; and the two Poets acted their part in ſoothing him, and keeping his mind in temper.

The ſecond Ode of *Horace* is a piece of the moſt refined flattery, and intended to ſerve the beſt purpoſes. The Poet, having lamented the miſeries to which the republic was reduced by the civil wars, artfully mentions *Auguſtus* as ſent by heaven to reſtore tranquillity to the ſtate; and to turn the Roman arms from ſhed-

ding

ding the blood of citizens, againſt their common enemies. Theſe two Poets, conſtantly preſenting him with ſome new piece of adulation, which he would conſider as ſo many ſteps towards his *Apotheoſis*, could not fail to have their influence in rendering him ſolicitous to merit their applauſe; ſince there was the higheſt probability that their works would be tranſmitted to the lateſt ages. The Poets too, in their laudable efforts, may be ſuppoſed to have ſucceeded the better that *Auguſtus* himſelf had a taſte for poetical compoſition, of which we have ſome ſmall remains. Having mentioned the untoward diſpoſitions of this Monarch, it is proper, in juſtice to his character, to obſerve here, that he, at leaſt, had the power to reſiſt them. From the death of *M. Anthony*, he ſeems to have ſuited himſelf to ſocial intercourſe; gave many examples of virtue, particularly in adhering tenaciouſly to the frugal manners of the ancient Romans. He likewiſe ſhewed ſome ſtriking examples of lenity in caſes where it was little merited; and, in his time, a greater freedom of ſpeech was uſed by the Senators, even againſt the Emperor himſelf, than they durſt ever afterwards venture upon.

The earlieſt age of poetry having been devoted to the civilization of mankind, by laws and morals, *Homer* and *Tyrtæus* ſeem to have been the firſt who introduced war and the adventures of heroes as a new ſubject; and this is held the commencement of its ſecond æra.

æra. Some, however, are of opinion, that Epic poetry was in uſe before *Homer's* time: but this muſt be uncertain, ſince the age of *Homer* is itſelf unknown. *Tyrtæus* flouriſhed near 700 years before the Chriſtian æra.

One would think the natural interpretation of the paſſage, *Vitæ monſtrata via eſt*, ought to be moral conduct: and yet this would be a repetition of what *Horace* had ſaid juſt before, an overſight for which perhaps no Author is leſs open to cenſure than *Horace*. Commentators, therefore, have choſen to interpret it as expreſſive of Phyſics rather than the moral regimen of life; in which caſe, *vita* is to be underſtood in the ſame ſenſe as *natura*; and poſſibly *Horace* may point at *Empedocles* and *Lucretius*, or others whoſe works are now loſt. But a more natural interpretation of this paſſage is that of Dr *Hurd*, who obſerves, that what had been ſaid of *Orpheus* and *Amphion* before, concerned the political ſtate of man; this, therefore, relates to the moral. It is true, theſe two are connected, or rather interwoven with one another; but they are often treated diſtinctly.

30. *Horace* next conſiders the important queſtion relating to the ſuperiority of nature or of art in poetical compoſition; and it is to be preſumed his deciſion will meet with univerſal approbation. But were we under the neceſſity of giving an anſwer to the alternative,

tive, it is not to be doubted that nature is to be held the ground-work, and conſequently indiſpenſable, not only in poetical, but in every other kind of compoſition. This ſo far conſiſts with truth, that we are conſtantly pleaſed to meet with vigorous efforts of nature; whereas we are better pleaſed when art, however uſeful and neceſſary, is concealed: indeed the greateſt powers of art ought to be exerted in giving nature an elegant but artleſs appearance. A vaſt foreſt crowded with lofty trees, ſhrubs, and vegetables of various kinds, may be beautified by removing ſome trees, pruning others, and by the like pieces of art judiciouſly applied; but ſtill a perſon of taſte would wiſh this foreſt to appear the work of nature, and to diſcover no traces of human art. Were we to apply this obſervation to the compoſitions of any particular Author, perhaps none would preſent themſelves to an Engliſh reader more readily than thoſe of *Shakeſpeare*. Notwithſtanding the excellencies of this Author, his exuberancies, it muſt be allowed, would admit of much pruning. But if the Corrector, who would undertake a work of ſo great delicacy, be not poſſeſſed of a large ſhare of art and judgment, he will hardly be able to conceal a violence done to nature. A modern Critic, in a compariſon of this Author with *M. Corneil*, offers too much incenſe to the powers of art in the one, and too little to thoſe of nature in the other.

In

In an age of high refinement, many acquire from converſation and reading a ſhare of art, though nature be wanting: theſe too come to judge, with a conſiderable degree of taſte, of the merit of other Authors. Works relating to polite literature, when happily compoſed, have conſtantly the appearance of eaſe, and in reading them we are apt to believe they had coſt the Authors little labour or difficulty. Theſe three circumſtances taken together have proved an *ignis fatuus* to many, who, not doubting of their own powers, have attempted compoſitions; but, being unſupported by nature, their works have perhaps hardly ſurvived themſelves. This was the fate of many Authors of the Auguſtan and ſubſequent ages, as we learn from *Horace*, *Perſius*, *Juvenal*, and the younger *Pliny*.

In times more rude and of greater ſimplicity, the caſe is otherwiſe: for art being wanting, Authors are then few, and the mind is prompted to compoſition ſolely or chiefly by the impulſe of nature. Authors, in this ſtate of things, write without conſtraint, or dread of criticiſm, and we find in them nature in an undreſs; but ſtill ſuch as to pleaſe thoſe who make nature their chief object. Of this *Chaucer*, and ſome others of a later date, are examples. *Homer*, we have reaſon to believe, lived in an age when a natural taſte rather than high refinement prevailed: hence he introduced into his poems deſcriptions, which he would have avoided, had he lived in the periods of refinement

of *Greece* and *Rome*: ſuch are his minute accounts of his heroes occupied in offices, which, though perhaps, in thoſe early times, not beneath the rank of ſo great chiefs, had been better omitted. It muſt be owned, however, that the Poet hath ſupported a degree of dignity, and is not diſagreeable even in theſe deſcriptions.

It is no leſs an entertaining than edifying piece of exerciſe, to examine Authors by the two ſtandards of nature and of art; whether in comparing them with one another, or in weighing the powers of particular Authors. Thus the efforts of nature in *Milton* are remarkable, and muſt ſtrike every reader not wholly void of taſte. Whether the art of this diſtinguiſhed Poet, in planning and conducting his work, be equal to his deſcriptive powers, may be doubted. *Paradiſe Loſt* is here meant. It would be in vain to bring *Homer* and *Virgil* together for ſuch a comparative trial. The natural and artificial powers of the former ſo far exceed thoſe of the Roman Poet, that we have good reaſon to believe, the Æneid would never have been attempted, had not the Iliad led the way. *Virgil* hath been thought to excel *Homer* in point of judgment. But had it been *Homer's* fate to have lived in the Auguſtan age, he would not have laid himſelf open to a cenſure of this kind. He would not have ſunk from the dignity of the Epic to give minute deſcriptions of mean ſubjects. Had he lived in a period when criti-

ciſm

ciſm renders Authors circumſpect, he would not have tranſgreſſed the laws of mythology ſo far as to repreſent the Father of the Gods over-reached by inferior Deities, and laid aſleep to ſerve a job.

Titus Livius, *Salluſt*, and *Tacitus*, far excel *Plutarch* in art: but *Plutarch* is at leaſt not inferior to any of the three Romans in the natural powers of an Hiſtorian. The true touchſtone of this is, the ſtriking characters by which he hath diſtinguiſhed his heroes; each of them being widely different from all the reſt: nor are theſe characters artfully drawn in a few laboured ſentences; but are naturally conveyed to the reader in the ſeries of actions which compoſe the reſpective lives: and though his deſcriptions be leſs elegant than thoſe of the other three Authors, they are not leſs natural.

31. The Poet, from this to the end of his work, whether ſerious or with ridicule, expoſes the dulneſs, defects, errors, and follies of the Poets of his own age. Theſe he intends as beacons by which his two friends might avoid the rocks on which others had ſuffered ſhipwreck. He nowhere more happily than here applies his own rule,

——————— *Ridiculum acri*
Fortius et melius magnas plerumque ſecat res.

It was a cuſtom with men and often with ladies of high rank and great fortunes among the Romans, to exerciſe

exercise themselves in compositions of taste, and particularly in those of the poetical kind. This we learn from *Cicero* and other Authors of that and the subsequent period. The younger *Pliny*, however, found it necessary to offer an apology to his friends for this sort of occupation. "There were some," says he, "it seems, who did not disapprove of my poems, but "at the same time censured me in a free and friendly "manner, for employing myself in composing and re-"citing them. I am so far, however, from desiring "to extenuate the charge, that I willingly acknow-"ledge myself still more deserving of it; and confess "that I sometimes amuse myself with writing verses, "and verses too of the gayer kind. I compose come-"dies; divert myself with pantomimes; read the Ly-"ric Poets; and enter into the spirit of the most wan-"ton Muse; in short, I am nothing averse to pleasan-"try, mirth, and gaiety; and, to sum up every kind "of innocent amusement in one word, *I am a man*. I "am not at all displeased, that those who are ignorant "that the most learned, the wisest, and the best of "men, have employed themselves in the same way, "should be surprised at my doing so: but those who "know what noble examples I follow, will allow me, "I trust, thus to err; but to err with those whom it "is an honour to imitate, not only in their most seri-"ous actions, but lightest amusements." To this apology he subjoins a catalogue of the most distinguished names of the Augustan and other periods, who had

used

uſed to relax their minds in the ſame manner, and concludes,—" I forbear to add *Nero* to the catalogue, " though I am ſenſible what is ſometimes practiſed by " the worſt of men does not therefore degenerate in- " to wrong; on the contrary, it ſtill maintains its cre- " dit, if frequently countenanced by the beſt *."

If it be aſked, why this hath not been ſo much a cuſtom with men of rank in other nations, as with the Romans; there is a ready anſwer. The ſureſt method to riſe in the Roman ſtate was by the powers of oratory. The youth of *Rome*, therefore, who were ſtimulated by ambition, and few of them were without it, applied themſelves ſeriouſly to the ſtudy of rhetoric. Thus they inſenſibly acquired a taſte for polite literature. When they came afterwards to exerciſe their oratorial talents in the Senate; as their powers in this art were greater, their clients were proportionally more numerous. When, therefore, a patron thought proper to commit his compoſitions to any of his clients or dependents, from a confidence in their taſte, he might well believe they would not hazard the loſs of his friendſhip by pointing out his faults, however much they might be diſpoſed to recommend themſelves to his favour by unmerited applauſe. The Calpurnian family being one of the moſt diſtinguiſhed in *Rome*, and *Piſo* the father having great weight in the Senate, *Horace* found it neceſſary to give the ſons a caution againſt

* Lib. v. Epiſt. 3.

againſt this paraſitical adulation, to which youth is, for the moſt part, too open.

32. *Quintilius*, mentioned in this paragraph, is repreſented as a moſt accurate Critic: and it is to be believed, as he was an older man than *Horace* and *Virgil*, he had been of ſingular uſe to both in their firſt poetical efforts; eſpecially as his manner appears, from this paſſage, to have been familiar to *Horace*. He is generally, and with great probability, believed to be the *Quintilius*, whoſe death *Horace* laments in the twenty-fourth Ode of the firſt Book, inſcribed to *Virgil*; and we have reaſon to believe, is the perſon of the ſame name mentioned by *Euſebius* in his Chronicon, as the familiar friend of *Horace* and *Virgil*, and is ſaid there to have died in the firſt year of the hundred and eighty-ninth Olympiad. *Virgil* died in the ſecond year of the hundred and nintieth Olympiad. *Quintilius*, therefore, died five years before *Virgil*, and ſixteen before *Horace*. The number of eminent men belonging to the Varian family, and ſome of them having the ſame names, hath been productive of uncertainty and miſtakes, eſpecially in chronology. Some Commentators have been ſo inattentive to the order of time as to ſuppoſe the *Quintilius* ſo much lamented by *Horace* and *Virgil* to be the General, who, with his legions, was cut off by *Arminius* in *Germany* *. This diſaſter did not happen till ſeventeen years after the death of *Horace*,

* *Vid.* Horat. in uſ. Delph. Ode 24. Not. in *Quintilium*.

race, and twenty-eight after that of *Virgil*. Others would make the *Quintilius*, who was maſſacred in *Germany*, the *Varus* who befriended *Virgil* in the recovery of his farm *. But the diſtance of time between the diviſion of the Mantuan lands and the diſaſter in *Germany* being fifty years, renders this ſuppoſition wholly improbable, and the more ſo, that *Virgil's* friend had, before the diviſion of theſe lands, ſignalized himſelf in war, and may, therefore, be ſuppoſed then at leaſt thirty years of age: ſo that, at the maſſacre in *Germany*, he muſt have been eighty years of age, or upwards. *Stephanus*, in his Biographical and Chronological Dictionary, hath fallen into both the errors juſt mentioned; and *Ainſworth* into the latter. Theſe, and ſeveral other Authors, have not diſtinguiſhed ſufficiently between *Alphenus*, or *Alfenus*, and *Quintilius Varus*.

With reſpect to the *Vari* and *Quintilii* of *Virgil* and *Horace*, the following account ſeems to be the moſt probable. There were two of the name of *Alphenus Varus* in the Auguſtan age. One who commanded in *Ciſalpine Gaul*, and who, with *Aſinius Pollio*, ſaved *Virgil's* farm. Another who, having been a cobler at *Cremona*, became afterwards a learned and celebrated civilian, compoſed ſeveral Books of Digeſts, and was at length dignified with the Conſulate. But he did not reach this high honour till the year of *Rome* 755,

* *Vid.* Not. Servii in verſ. 6. Ecl. VI.

755, which was twenty years after *Virgil's* death. He muſt, therefore, have been in a mean ſtation of life long after *Virgil* compoſed his Eclogues; which appears from the manner in which *Horace* mentions him in the third Satyre of the firſt Book. But this *Varus* is not once mentioned by *Virgil*. The *Varius*, of whom *Horace* ſpeaks in the ſixth Ode of the firſt Book, was evidently an eminent Poet, and we have ſtill a few fragments of his compoſition. He is frequently introduced by *Horace*; but never once by *Virgil*: for the proper name, in the thirty-fifth verſe of the ninth Eclogue, ought not to be *Vario*, as ſome, and among theſe *Servius*, would make it, but *Varo*, which appears from the Poet addreſſing him, in the ſame Eclogue, *Vare*. This *Varus*, however, being ranked with *Cinna*, muſt have been a Poet of diſtinction, and *Virgil* evidently ſpeaks of them as Poets of ſuperior note. Whether the *Quintilius Varus*, who loſt his life and his legions in *Germany*, was a Poet, or known to *Virgil* and *Horace* as ſuch, is wholly uncertain. The *Varius* mentioned in the ſixth Eclogue is *Alphenus*, *Virgil's* patron.

It doth not appear, nor ſhould I think it probable, that the *Quintilius Cremonenſis* of *Euſebius*, had the name of *Varus*. *Horace*, it is to be preſumed, would have made uſe of the family name, in preference to a *prænomen*, as in the eighteenth Ode of the firſt Book, he addreſſes his friend, *Vare*, and nowhere introduces his

his *prænomen*: and this is generally the caſe with the reſt of the Poet's friends, to whom he addreſſes his Odes, Epiſtles and Satyres. Beſides, the name *Varus* would be more convenient in poetical compoſition than *Quintilius*, eſpecially where the verſes are ſhort, as in the Ode where the death of *Quintilius* is lamented.

There are ſome examples which tend to prove that it conſiſted with polite manners among the *Romans*, when writing with ceremony, to avoid the *prænomen*. When *Horace* writes to *Mæcenas* or *Agrippa*, we never hear of *Cilnius*, *Marcus* or *Vipſanius*: and though there were many of the name of *Varus* or *Varius*, and conſequently ſome diſtinguiſhing mark might have been expected; yet *Virgil* and *Horace* conſtantly addreſs them by the family name. The Art of Poetry is addreſſed to the two Sons of *Piſo*, perhaps including the Father. But when the Poet ſpeaks to the elder Son alone, though the *prænomen* would have been more convenient, and ſufficiently known to every reader in *Rome* at that time, he, nevertheleſs, ſeems to avoid this, and ſays, *O major juvenum*. In ſome caſes *Horace* makes uſe of two names, as in the ſecond Ode of the ſecond Book, *Criſpe Salluſti*: but *Salluſt* had likewiſe the *prænomen Caius*. It is to be obſerved too, that ſome *Romans* had two family names, as *Scipio Æmilianus*.

But when the *Romans* wrote to their intimate friends, perhaps in a jocular manner, or at leaſt without ceremony, the *prænomen*, we may preſume, was uſed without reſerve. This ſeems to have been the caſe, when any perſon was mentioned by the Poets with ridicule or raillery, as when *Horace* introduces *Varus* the cobler in the third Satyre of the firſt Book, he avoids *Varus*, and ſtiles him *Alfenus*.

From theſe obſervations, I ſhould think *De Nores*, with many others, in a miſtake in ſuppoſing the *Quintilius*, in the Epiſtle to the *Piſos*, and in the Ode juſt mentioned, to be of the Varian family. *Deſcriptis adulatorum moribus*, ſays he, *et conſuetudine, affert optimi et ſapientiſſimi judicis exemplum: Quintilii ſcilicet, qui tantæ erat auctoritatis apud Romanos, ut ei Virgilii opera Auguſtus tradiderit emendanda.* The Commentator probably refers here to the *Varus* mentioned by *Donatus*, to whom, along with *Tucca*, the works of *Virgil* are ſaid, by that Biographer, to have been committed. *Donatus* mentions a *Lucius*, but not a *Quintilius*, *Varus* or *Varius*. *De Nores*, if we may judge from the ſpecimens in Mr *Colman's* notes upon this Epiſtle, ſeems to be a judicious and learned Critic; and he is ſo far from being ſingular in his opinion relating to *Quintilius*, that there is perhaps not a Commentator who doth not conſider him as of the Varian family.

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The former part of theſe papers were in the Printer's hands before I had an opportunity of ſeeing Mr *Colman's* ingenious tranſlation, which, beſides the recommendation of elegance, I take to be more literal than any verſified tranſlation hitherto preſented to the public. I was not a little pleaſed to find the ſentiments of ſo good a judge, with reſpect to the ſubſtance and plan of this Epiſtle, as well as the Author's motive in compoſing it, coinciding with my own.

" The five verſes from *vir bonus*," obſerves Lord *Roſcommon*, " are admirable, and include almoſt all that " the Rhetoricians have ſaid of criticiſm." They are, indeed, remarkably comprehenſive, and, at the ſame time, explicit: nor can criticiſm be well ſuppoſed to extend further, than to add ſpirit to what is flat, to ſmooth and render melodious what is harſh, to correct by proper caſtigation what is uncouth and inflated, to elucidate what is obſcure, to retrench redundancies, and to mark what ought to be changed. A good man will be a candid Critic: that is, as *Horace* expreſſes it, will become an *Ariſtarchus*: will rather hazard the reſentment of his friend, than not point out to him wherein he is in danger of expoſing himſelf to public ridicule. The character of *Ariſtarchus* is well known for a judicious and refined Critic; in ſo much that his name hath paſſed into a proverb, in oppoſition to that of *Zoilus*, who was noted for Cyniciſm and peeviſhneſs.

Quintilian

Quintilian hath obſerved, that it is eaſier to add and retrench, than to change: and few, it is preſumed, are ſo little converſant in compoſition, as not to be ſenſible of the truth of this obſervation. A paſſage, whether in proſe or in verſe, and in ſenſe neither redundant nor deficient, may, nevertheleſs, be ſo untractable as to teaſe an Author of taſte, and fruſtrate his efforts to poliſh it to the ſtandard of refinement, even while he remains conſcious that the paſſage is ſtill below it. This, or a thought ſimilar to it, is to be found ſomewhere in *Cicero*.

In the verſe, *Et male tornatos incudi reddere verſus*, *Horace* hath been charged with impropriety in uſing two figures which cannot agree in the ſame ſentence: the *Tornus*, or turning-wheel, being uſed, it is ſaid, only for wood, ivory, and the like ſubſtances; but the anvil for iron and other metals. We can hardly believe, however, that the ancients could fail to make uſe of the turning-wheel, in giving the laſt poliſh to metallic bodies of a globular, cylindrical, or whatever other round form. *Horace*, therefore, when he meant an advice to make a total change of verſes deemed already complete, could not have introduced a figure more happily than a piece of work, which having paſſed from the anvil to the turning-wheel or laſt poliſh, is ſtill found ſo faulty as to render it neceſſary to be begun anew by undergoing the operation of the anvil. By ſubſtituting *formatos* for *tornatos*, the ſentence is enervated,

enervated, and becomes leſs expreſſive. Dr *Bentley* would make it *ter natos*; and labours much to ſhew the propriety of this conjecture. Dr *Bentley's* literature and critical merit are univerſally and juſtly allowed, as well as the obligation under which he hath laid every claſſical reader: but it muſt be owned, he ſometimes diſcovers an extraordinary fondneſs to ſtep out of the common road. The propoſal of *ter natos*, as a modeſt conjecture, would have been better received, than by endeavouring to force it upon us by proving every other reading to be improper or abſurd. The paſſage of *Propertius*, quoted by ſome of the Commentators, is ſufficient to aſcertain the propriety of this figure in *Horace*.

Incipe jam anguſto verſus componere torno,
Inque tuos ignes, dure poeta, veni.

If the fire and the turning-wheel were uſed for the ſame kind of work, we may well believe the anvil would likewiſe be neceſſary.

33. From ſerious reflections, *Horace* proceeds to ridicule; holds the diſeaſe of writing verſes as contagious. This paſſion ſeems, indeed, by the accounts of the Authors of that age, to have been almoſt univerſal. Perhaps the great encouragement which *Horace* and *Virgil* had met with, might have ſtimulated many others

others to exerciſe their talents, however mean, in the ſame line.

The unhappy deluſion, under which ſome Poets labour, of purſuing the ſublime while they are unqualified for it, is treated by *Horace* with profound contempt. He, with much propriety, compares them to fowlers or ſtargazers, who, conſtantly looking upwards, loſe their way and ſtumble into pits. In order to prevent bombaſt compoſition, it were good that poetical efforts in the ſublime, were always ſo conducted as to be ſomewhat inferior to the Poet's abilities. This ſeems to have been the caſe with *Virgil*; he conſtantly moves with a modeſt dignity, and we can diſcover a reſerve and diffidence in his higheſt flights. *Homer*, notwithſtanding his vaſt and unwearied exertions, cannot be ſaid to overſtretch his powers in the ſublime. *Horace*, continuing his alluſion, thinks that one ought not raſhly to give aſſiſtance to a Poet who may be found in a pit; conſidering him as one of thoſe moon-ſtruck Bards, whom violent overſtrainings of the brain have reduced to a ſtate of deſpair.

34. From the preceding idea, *Horace* is led to introduce *Empedocles*. This Sicilian Philoſopher, as is well known, is ſaid to have thrown himſelf into Mount *Ætna*, that it might be believed he had been taken up to heaven by the Gods. Poſſibly he might have ſhared the fate of *Pliny*, being, like him, led by curioſity, to approach

approach too near a Volcano during an eruption. Or perhaps, having, as a Philoſopher, endeavoured to account for the cauſes of thoſe eruptions, but finding himſelf unequal to ſuch an inveſtigation, he might therefore be ſaid to have been ſwallowed up by the mountain; as *Ariſtotle* is ſaid to have thrown himſelf into the Eubœan ſea, for not having been able to account for its tides. According to *Timæus*, *Empedocles* died in *Peloponneſus*. *Horace*, without impropriety, calls this Philoſopher a Poet. He compoſed a poetical volume of conſiderable extent on the nature of things. It may be here obſerved, that almoſt all the Greek Philoſophers amuſed themſelves occaſionally with poetry. *Solon* made an addreſs to the Gods in verſe, as an introduction to his body of laws engraven in wood: and even *Socrates* is ſaid, not long before his death, to have turned ſome Fables of *Æſop* into verſe.

In the paſſage, *Ardentem frigidus Ætnam inſiluit*, the oppoſition of *frigidus* and *ardens* hath the appearance of a puerile antitheſis. But by *frigidus*, it is to be preſumed, *Horace* meant no more than that *Empedocles* proceeded deliberately and coolly in his deſperate meaſure. Others would make the word *frigidus* to ſignify the madneſs of the Poet. It may be obſerved here, that this and the preceding paragraph, or ſome parts of them, ſeem to be of a more juvenile compoſition than the former part of the poem: nor is it improbable that *Horace*, having had them in reſerve, embraced

braced the opportunity of inſerting them here, the better to induce the young *Piſos* to poliſh their works thoroughly, and ſubmit them to the examination of friends, before ſhewing them to the public.

Horace's obſervation, that it is no better than murder to preſerve one, contrary to his inclination, from putting himſelf to death, is not ſerious, the whole paſſage being ironical, and meaning poetical madneſs, which is conſidered as incurable. That he entertained no ſentiments of this nature, appears, as Lord *Roſcommon* hath obſerved, from the paſſage of *Damaſippus* in the third Satyre of the ſecond Book. Mr *Pope* had probably the verſes of *Horace* concluding this poem in his eye, when he complained to Dr *Arbuthnot* of being beſet by Poets ſtung with the rage of writing.

FINIS.